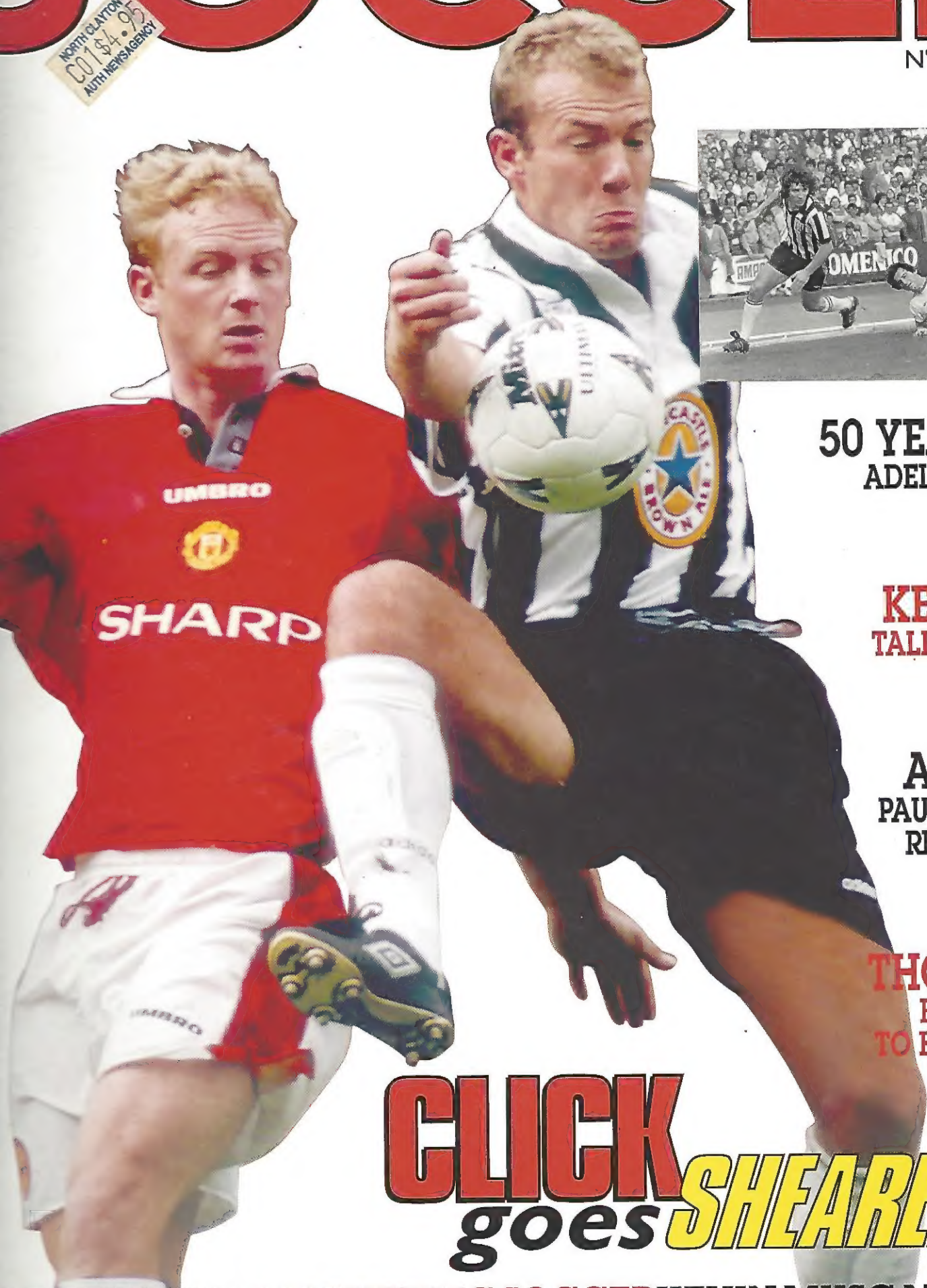


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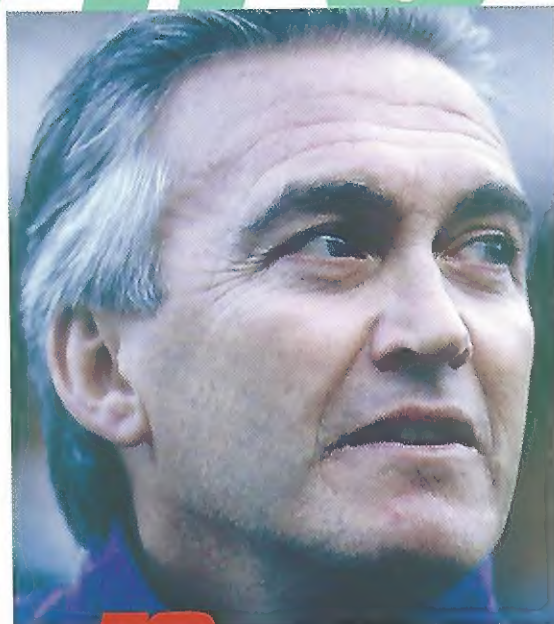
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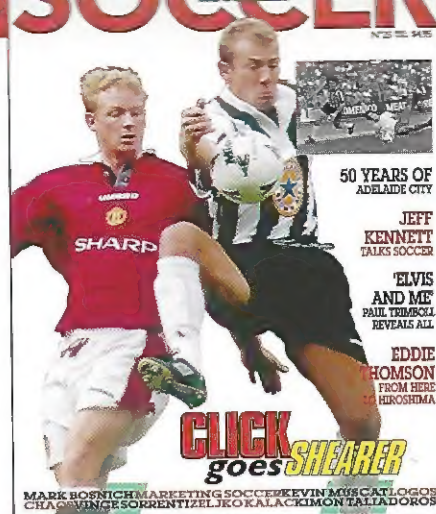
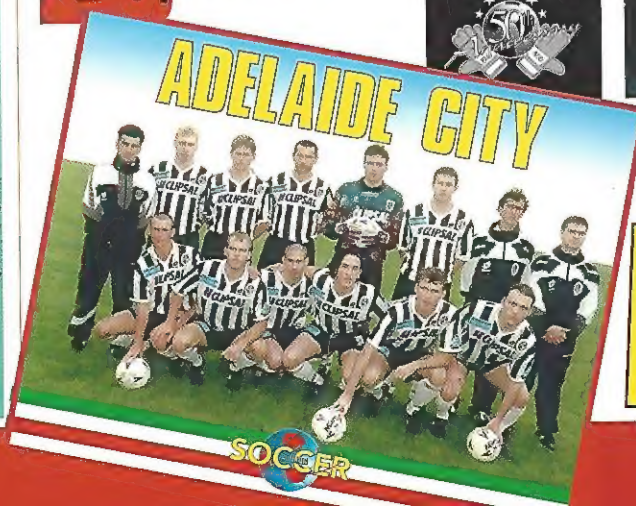
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Jeff Kennett

NEXT ISSUE
ON SALE
WEDNESDAY, 22 JANUARY, 1997



Adelaide City, one of the giants of Australian soccer, is 50 years old in 1996 - a unique sporting and cultural milestone.

Frank Pangallo looks back at the proud history of this great club.



In November this year Adelaide City celebrates its 50th anniversary, a unique milestone not only in sporting terms in this country but also in Australia's multicultural history.

You would be hard pressed to find another soccer club that's been around so long and achieved as much on and off the field as the Zebras. Talk about City and you discover a

wonderful tapestry woven from Australia's post-war immigration boom and a harmonious integration within the South Australian community.

Adelaide City's remarkable history of success spans five decades and it has given the City some equally remarkable exposure overseas - a special status that is truly the envy of other Australian soccer clubs.

For instance, the world record fastest

MARCH



produce big things. And the vociferous Italian press also expressed their disgust at the debacle over the ethnic colors issue, some leading journals even giving it front page prominence. But now the dust has settled and the Zebras can get on with the business of playing football and enjoying their golden anniversary!

The 1940s, 50s and 60s

Savoy- the name first adopted by the Italian immigrants before it was changed to Juventus - played their first games on bumpy, pothole strewn paddocks in the Adelaide Hills. Press reports at the time often referred to them as the team of "new Australians".

But these battlers helped breathe new life into a sport that had slowly withered on the vine. In less than 10 years Juventus went from an obscure entity to a major force in the South Australian Soccer Federation.

The old timers still fondly recall the "golden era" of the mid-1950s when Juventus swept all before them in a remarkable run of championships - 1953-54 and 1956-59, the latter including an unbeaten run of four seasons which remains an Australian record.

Former player Max Huffa, now a City official, has fond memories of those halcyon days when the only hot shower you got was from the verbal abuse of your opponents.

"There was no money in it then. We played for the love of the game and the club," he says.

"It's hard to imagine that the club has come so far when you consider what we had then. But it's a mark of the dedication the supporters and officials had. They worked very hard then and Adelaide City wouldn't be where it is today if it wasn't for those unsung founding fathers."

After several venues, Juventus finally made its home at Olympic Sports Field, a purpose-built arena 10 minutes east of the city at Kensington. The club was to remain there until 1989 when the demands of a summer soccer season under lights meant a move to Hindmarsh Stadium.

Juventus, with the Greek-backed Hellas, emerged as the heavyweights of SA football and



Above: Crystal Palace's **Carl Veart** - signed from Adelaide City.

Left: **John Nyskohus** - former player, current coach of the Zebras.

"I left a piece of my heart in Adelaide," says master coach Rale Rasic, who took charge for two seasons in 1979 and delivered the club its first national trophy- the 1979 Philips Cup.

"There's passion and tradition that you won't find at many other clubs in this country. And then there's the football they play....flair and artistry is their hallmark and anyone who has come up against them will always pay them the biggest of compliments."

Adelaide City's rise to the prominence it so richly deserves today wasn't without its hardships. The club's Italian founders had to battle against racial stereotypes so typical of post-war Australia, especially in the 50s and 60s.

scored by Damian Mori last season was seen by a TV audience of one billion - a feat to make any marketing wizard or, for that matter, sponsor salivate! The Italian press has even saluted the team with proud Italian origins on its three national championships. And of course, Juventus of Turin - the inspiration for Adelaide's humble beginnings in 1946 - have also shown a sense of pride in the little club down under that rarely fails to

THE ZEBRAS



it led to the now-famous rivalry between them.

The 1970s

It was at Olympic Sports Field that Adelaide City made its entry into the national

league in 1977- then known as the

Philips Soccer League - against Brisbane Lions, with Edmund Kreft at the helm as coach.

Adelaide didn't figure well in the inaugural season but did record excellent crowds. Kreft had enjoyed a very successful period with Juve in the mid-70s and the board decided to stick by him when the club took its big step. That first NSL squad boasted some notable talent, in particular the midfield genius of John Perin and a dour defensive midfielder called Zoran Matic. They both went on to coach the Zebras and both won 'Coach of the Year' titles, with Matic especially successful. It was a fine mix of experience and a touch of youth that included Sergio Melta.

"It was an exciting period for all of us. I don't think we really expected as much as we got from the NSL," recalls Melta today, a veteran of more than 400 NSL games with the one club and now retired from the game.

"The competition was fierce. I know we wanted to do well against our arch-rivals West Adelaide as well as our sister club Marconi in Sydney."

Adelaide City, with South Melbourne Hellas - now the ubiquitous Lakers - and Marconi, are the only clubs to have played in every NSL season since its inauguration. It's no coincidence that those very three clubs were at the forefront of the league's formation.

At the time Charlie Caruso was President of the club. Along with South Melbourne Hellas' Sam Papasavas, Marconi's Tony Labbozzetta and Footscray's Tony Kovacs, Caruso played a big role in kick-starting a competition the then Australian Soccer Federation had for so long tried to resist.

Edmund Kreft, who had achieved title and cup successes with Juve in the state league, remained in charge to mould together his squad. Kreft's hallmark was producing teams brimful of silky skills and he didn't disappoint the eager local 'tifosi'.

The new national league also elevated the already fiercely contested derbies against West Adelaide Hellas to dizzy heights. The fans were packed in like sardines for the first NSL derby, with the honors falling to Juve. That season also saw the emergence of goal-scoring machine Dixie Deans. Deans came from Scotland's Celtic with quite a reputation for his extroverted performances both on and off the field. The fans loved his larrikin approach and he was quite a drawcard. Deans certainly lived up to his prodigious tag, bagging plenty of goals and

getting everybody excited with his rugged but effective style of running at defences.

Considering the depth of talent Kreft enjoyed, it was surprising that Juve couldn't finish up there with Sydney giants Marconi and Sydney City Hakoah in 1977. Still, almost 100,000 fans turned out to watch the black and whites in that historic first season.

Adelaide promised so much in 1978 but the wins were few and far between in the second half of the season. A six goal thrashing by Hakoah - remembered as the Mother's Day Massacre - led to Kreft's demise. Les Scheinflug took the reins for the final few games. It would have been an otherwise unmemorable year had it not been for the final, dramatic match of the season in which Adelaide was up against West Adelaide in what was to be the championship decider. Hellas had also experienced turmoil, dumping their coach for quietly-spoken Scot, Jim Adam. But their fortune had turned for the better with an amazing unbeaten stretch that landed them with an unlikely championship chance.

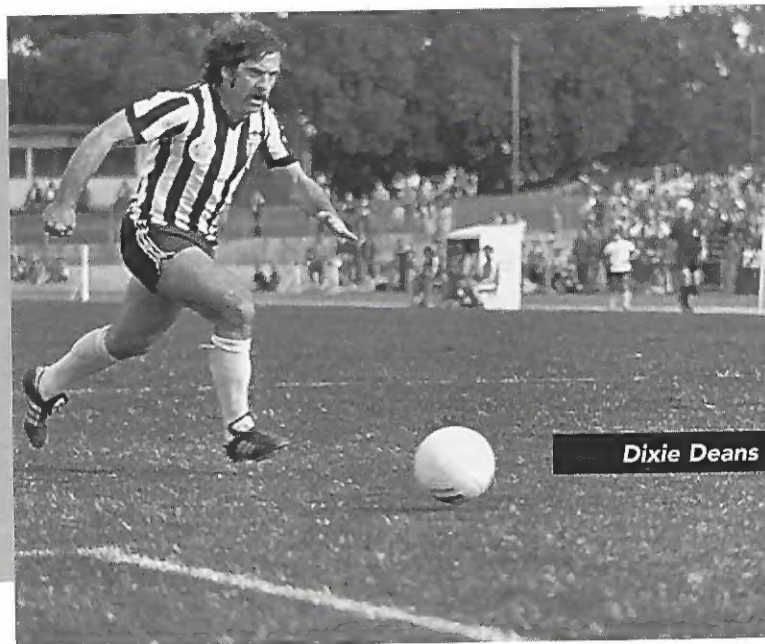
It was all dependent on that bone-crunching final derby. Hellas needed only a draw while Juve only had its battered pride to play for. The game lived up to expectations and more and for those of us who were privileged to be there, it remains one of the finest soccer contests ever witnessed at Hindmarsh.

With 17,000 fans glued to the action, it was Juventus who threatened to spoil the party in a nerve-wracking first half. John Perin rocked the Hellas nerves just before half time with a 40-metre free kick that exploded into the net behind a numb Martyn Crook in goal. And predictably yet another titanic battle ensued with Hellas fighting back courageously to snatch the draw - and the title - courtesy of a virtuoso effort from left back Vic Bozanic.

Rale Rasic, World Cup coaching hero from 1974 and already a legendary soccer figure despite his open warfare with Sir Arthur George and the ASF, was lured to Adelaide by Charlie Caruso after Rasic parted company with Marconi. Rasic injected more flair into the team, adding South American Agenor Muniz to an already imposing midfield that boasted John Perin and Gary Marocchi. Up front Dixie Deans - still a goal scoring menace despite a car accident that almost robbed him of his sight -

and John Nyskohus gave Adelaide penetration, while across the back Rasic could count on the enormous resilience of Buggy Nyskohus, Glen Dods, David Jones, John Besir and Bobby Russell and the brilliance of Peter Marshall on the last line. It was truly a fine team that perhaps deserved more than the Philips Cup, the club's first national trophy won after a heart-stopping final in which Adelaide came from behind to snatch a 3-2 win over St. George at Kensington.

Rasic brought with him a strong sense of professionalism, sorely needed but not always appreciated by the demanding fans. Rasic helped mastermind a tour to Adelaide by American glamour club New York Cosmos, a United Nations of stars featuring the mastery of Franz Beckenbauer, English striker Dennis Tueart, Italian Giorgio Chinaglia and Dutchman Johan Neeskens. A record 15,000 watched a star-struck City take on the mighty pros, who won the match 2-0. But Brian Northcote almost stole the show with a terrific effort on Beckenbauer.



Dixie Deans

The 1980s and 90s

The huge cost of competing in the NSL almost bought Adelaide undone in 1980. Facing huge debts on its clubrooms and another season of mixed fortunes, City axed Rasic and attempted to rationalise its set up just to survive financially. The next six years were rather bleak and resulted in a succession of coaches who couldn't deliver what the fans badly wanted.

On the whim of a handshake and a paltry salary, former player Zoran Matic took over in 1986, marking the beginning of Adelaide's golden decade in the NSL.

This was the period when the NSL consisted of 24 teams, divided into Southern and Eastern conferences.

But it wasn't always plain sailing for Matic. The Zebras got off to a rocky start, winless after

atches and even then some were baying Matic's head! Matic remained typically in the face of harsh and unjust criticism showed enormous faith in a group of players, nurturing them into a side of team rather than a team of stars. Among his players were Aurelio Vidmar, Alex Tobin, Melita, Charlie Villani, Steve Maxwell, Milen and Adrian Santrac.

They became the architects of City's now footballing style, a game based on zonal defence, patient possession and devastating counter-attack. It also required much patience from the coach and loyalty in his players that hardly ever wavered. It's funny how things turn the full circle in football, even in less than a season. Matic paid off the initial criticism of his approach, relying on his guns and managing to give City the national title. They then faced a play-off against Sydney Olympic, the eastern champions, for the national title. But City's record of emulating West Adelaide's 1978

His faith in his players was as immeasurable as his stubbornness but his first love was always the club, so much so that for all his time at City he was never under a contract. A handshake agreement and a token coaching fee that would embarrass many of today's high fliers was all he wanted. As Matic reinforced his authority and City perfected its dour style, the club became the most respected in the league.

Along the way they were labelled "the Aristocrats", picking up a further two championships, Cups and playing in four consecutive grand finals. A fabulous record that has clearly made him the best coach currently in the game.

More impressive is the quality of player that Matic developed or recruited for a specific purpose. Aurelio and Tony Vidmar, Robert Zabica, Carl Veart, Damian Mori, Alex Tobin and Milan Ivanovic are just some of the icons whose careers have flourished under Matic's guidance.

So it's no coincidence that for the past six years, City has provided the backbone of the national team and continues to do so. Matic now finds himself in the spotlight again as club coach of Collingwood and a firm contender for the

In tandem with City's golden decade under Matic, the club's success and marketability also became a model for the other NSL clubs. City showed how to widen spectator appeal through novel marketing initiatives and professional presentations, many of which were the brainchild of the late David Jenkins.

City has been able to successfully integrate its traditional Italian roots with the community at large. That's why soccer success in Australia is synonymous with the name Adelaide City Zebras.

With the third millennium approaching, City now finds itself at yet another watershed in its illustrious history. The stability of the Matic years was broken in 1996 with the accession of John Perin. Perin, reigning Coach of the Year after doing a remarkable job to guide the Zebras to third place, quit suddenly pre-season because of differences he had with City's board. John Nyskohus now has the job and the unenviable task of consolidating City's reputation while facing the prospect that he must rebuild the core of the team.

For the club built from nothing by Italian immigrants, it's just another hurdle that will be overcome. Adelaide City is now a major force in this country and the club is well-positioned for Australian soccer's inevitable push into the Asian market.

The Zebras' talent conveyor belt has provided a steady stream of players for the national team over the years - the highlight probably being the 1993 World Cup games against Argentina when

what was effectively an Adelaide City defence restricted Maradona, Batistuta, Redondo and Balbo to just two goals over 180 minutes.

The club has also established a formidable reputation as a supplier of class players to foreign teams. Just ask European clubs like Feyenoord, Crystal Palace and Borussia Moenchengladbach about Aurelio Vidmar, Carl Veart and Damian Mori, for example.

The next 50 years hold great promise for Adelaide City, three-time national league champions. The team that started out in 1946 playing on pothole-riddled grounds in the South Australian second division has come a long way - congratulations, Zebras.



They've even won on *Sale of the Century*. Adelaide City captain **Alex Tobin** poses with the *Battle of the Codes* Trophy.

national coaching position. Matic might not be with the Zebras any longer but his popularity remains undiminished on the terraces at Hindmarsh and around

cafes in Adelaide. They'll respect him regardless of which side he's in charge of, with the possible exception of rivals West Adelaide!

"I could never coach another Adelaide side against Adelaide City," he once told me with a cheeky grin and wink. Even though Matic won over many of the game's aficionados in the 90s, he regards the 1986 championship as the most satisfying moment in his still burgeoning career.

"It is very special to me because those players were a special group. I stuck by them because they stuck by me. Nobody expected us to do what we did, not even a lot of our own supporters," he said not long after claiming his third championship. And he always enjoyed beating West Adelaide. In fact in all his time at City, West only managed to turn the tables on the Zebras twice!

ph seemed to dissolve in the first leg at Hindmarsh as Olympic left with a 1-0 win. It gave City much hope in the deciding leg to be played at Parramatta Stadium. Not so, though. He stuck to his strategy while Olympic foolishly celebrated even before the final whistle, playing into Adelaide's hands with a cocky approach. Just as Olympic fans were believing the title was theirs, Charley Villani and Steve Maxwell tore the heart out of Sydney Olympic defence with terminal counterattacks. City returned to a heroes' welcome. Matic's credibility began an incredible run that for the next 10 years he had the complete faith and trust of not only the players but also the club's board. Matic's record remains a record in a competition notorious for coaching scalps.

Adelaide City national league honour roll

Years in national league :

1977 to 1996

Championships :

1986, 1991/92, 1993/94

Runners-up :

1992/93, 1994/95

Finalists :

1986, 1989/90, 1990/91, 1991/92, 1992/93, 1993/94, 1994/95, 1995/96

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Asia calling

The announcement of the Asia Pacific Football Cup is potentially the most exciting news to hit Australian soccer in years. The brainchild of entrepreneur Harry Michaels and former Marconi and Wollongong City coach Berti Mariani, the competition will consist of four clubs from Asia, three from Oceania and one 'guest' club (probably from the U.S.A.). It's set to kick off in mid-1997.

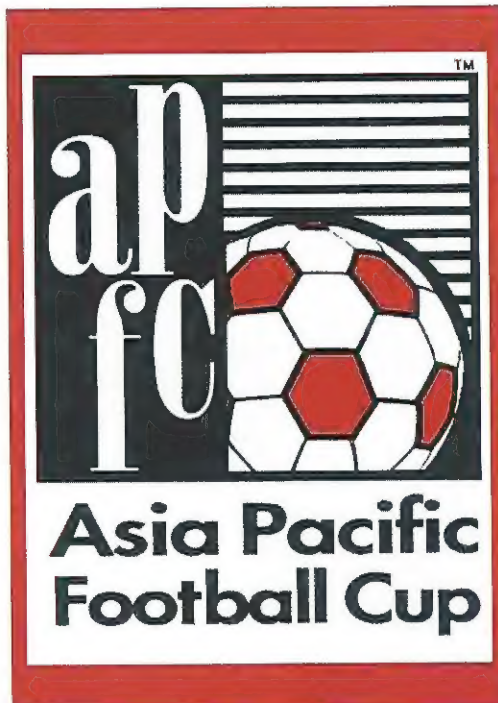
For years Australian soccer fans have looked on enviously at the kind of crowds enjoyed by Asian clubs. The steady flow of Aussie players to Malaysia is an indication of the amount of money generated by soccer in Asia. The recent spectacular rise of the J-League in Japan, attracting stars including Gary Lineker and Toto Schillaci since its formation, has made the prospect of this tournament all the more enticing.

"I think it's a very important tournament for the future development of football in the Asia Pacific region," says Berti Mariani, general manager of the new competition. "It's a very attractive concept to the Asian confederation, both financially and otherwise."

"We've been following the proper FIFA protocol as far as organising the tournament. It was put at the Oceania confederation at executive level, of which Soccer Australia is a member. It was agreed to in principle by all nations, subject to a couple of conditions being clarified."

"The Asian confederation is approaching their clubs now to finalise which clubs will compete. They're looking at the representatives being the finalists in their Champions Cup and their Cup Winners Cup."

It isn't hard to imagine potential Australian sponsors finding the prospect of Asian exposure fairly enticing. "You would hope that there is a trickle down effect (to the Australian national league)," says Mariani. "Clubs that will be in this tournament will obviously gain great benefits from their exposure in Asia, and therefore you would hope that that would carry on with



their sponsors."

What will the Australian public make of it? "Nothing's easy to sell - you've got to do your work. But I believe it has the potential to be a very important sporting competition, not only in Australia but right throughout the Asia and Pacific region."

Malaysian club Selangor has just spent \$1.5 million on Tony Cottey from West Ham, and Japanese teams regularly fork out seven figure sums on players. With the financial clout of clubs such as the Japanese and Malaysians, do our Aussie clubs have any chance of winning the inaugural cup?

"The level of competition between the clubs should be quite close," says Mariani. "Potentially Australian clubs could go well but if you look at the organisation and the way the J-League is set up, you've got to have a doubt in your mind. At the same time, this tournament will give Australia a gauge of where it sits. That's why it's very important for Australian soccer that this tournament goes ahead."

again. A Sydney-based Ericsson Cup star was spotted enjoying a quiet cigarette after a recent matchwinning performance. Doesn't he know they stunt your growth, not to mention shorten your life?

KRNCEVIC SET TO COACH CARLTON

Carlton's preparations for their inclusion in the 1997/98 Ericsson Cup continue to gather momentum. It is believed Gippsland Falcons' Eddie Krncevic is the hot favourite for the Blues' coaching position. The experience of the former Anderlecht, FC Liege and Dinamo Zagreb striker could prove invaluable to the new national league club in their first season.

In other news from Optus Oval, the arrival of soccer has attracted major corporate interest. The Carlton soccer club and Australian rules club are on the verge of entering into an historic joint sponsorship deal with either Reebok, Nike or Adidas. It is believed the deal may be worth up to \$5 million and will be easily the most lucrative sponsorship agreement ever entered into by an Australian soccer club.

THE AUSSIE CREWE

One English club seems to have taken a particular liking to Australian goalkeepers. Within the first couple of months of the 1996/97 season, Second division Crewe Alexandra had already used two Aussies between the sticks - Queenslander Jason Kearton and former South Melbourne and Canberra Cosmos keeper Steve Mautone, on loan from West Ham.

Elsewhere in England, Victorian Frank Talia has been a regular in goal for Swindon this season, while ex-St George and Wollongong City goalie John Filan has also seen first team action recently for Premier League side, Coventry. Add to that Mark Bosnich and Sydney United's recently-retired expatriate Zeljko Kalac, and you can see that whatever problems the Socceroos might face in their quest to qualify for France 1998, the goalkeeping spot should be adequately filled. ■

Smokin'!

Maybe

it's time for the 'Quit'

campaign to sponsor the national league

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No cheesy
smiles. No beaches.
just a great
fragrance.

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INNOVATE

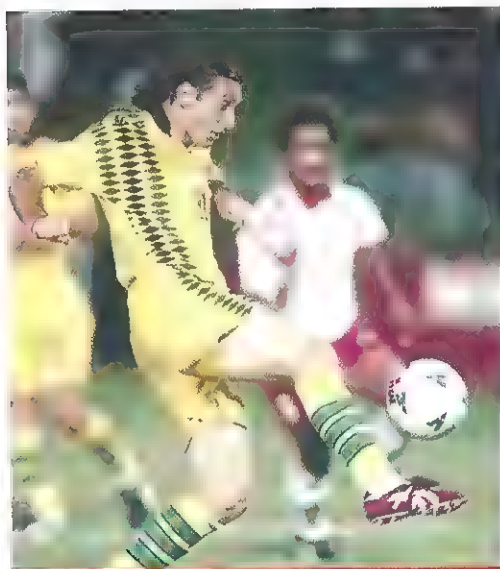


HU
HUGO

WADE'S FAREWELL

Kris Trajanovski scored a hat-trick and Eddie Thomson's Scottish brogue filled the open spaces of an Australian arena for possibly the last time, but the Socceroos' 5-0 victory against Tahiti in Canberra will always be remembered as the day Wadey called it quits.

Paul Wade - the man who scored against Argentina, marked Maradona, played against Lineker, Romario, Papin and Mikhailichenko, all the time edging towards a record 119 Australian appearances - finally decided that his body had taken enough punishment. The home ground of his current club, Canberra Cosmos, was a fitting venue to take his final international bow.

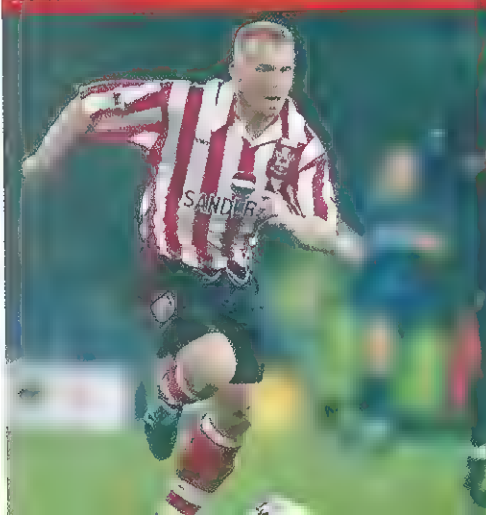


John Damidis/Sporting Pix

Kris Trajanovski: Red boots = hat-trick

He left the field in the 70th minute to a standing ovation from the 9,500 crowd at the Bruce Stadium, by which time the Socceroos were 11-0 ahead on aggregate, and well and truly on their way to the prestigious (not to

Robbie Slater



John Baub-Sporting Pix



One more time with feeling: Paul Wade leads Australia on to the field against Tahiti

mention lucrative) Intercontinental Cup in Saudi Arabia in late-1997.

Trajanovski, his red boots clashing dramatically with his green and gold kit, took his tally to seven goals in three Socceroo appearances, while Robbie Hooker and Paul Trimboli rounded off the scoring.

Taking his place on the bench amid a barrage of hugging and backslapping, the emo-

tion on Wade's face was clear for all to see. It was typical of a player who has worn his heart on his sleeve throughout his 10 years the national team, relying more on determination than deftness to make his mark. Paul Wade's contribution to Australia's rise in football credibility over the last decade won't be forgotten.

AUSTRALIANS IN ENGLAND

compiled by Andrew Howe

Premier League

		League app.	goals	Cup app.	goals
Aston Villa	Mark Bosnich	3	-	1	-
Coventry	John Filan	0+1sub	-	-	-
Southampton	Robbie Slater*	9+2	-	2	-
West Ham	Stan Lazaridis	5+3	-	2+1	-
West Ham	Steve Mautone**	1	-	2	-

Division One

Crystal Palace	Kevin Muscat	16	2	6	1
Crystal Palace	Carl Veart	15+1	4	6	2
Reading	Andrew Bernal	12	-	1+1	-
Reading	Stuart Lovell	1+3	-	1	-
Sheffield Utd	Doug Hodgson***	4+1	-	1+1	-
Swindon	Frank Talia	15	-	5	-
Wolves	Steve Corica	12+2	-	2	-

Division Two

Bristol City	Paul Agostino	10	3	3+1	1
Bristol City	David Seal	0+6	-	0+1	-
Crewe	Jason Kearton	4	-	-	-
Millwall	Lucas Neill	13+3	3	1+1	-
Notts County	Shaun Murphy	16	-	2	-
Watford	Richard Johnson	11+2	1	2+2	-

* Robbie Slater also made 1 app + 2 sub for West Ham.

**Steve Mautone also made 3 app for Crewe.

***Doug Hodgson also made 1 app for Burnley

Harry Kewell has appeared on the bench for Leeds United several times this season, but is yet to make an on-field appearance.

Figures current as of 2 November, 1996

POLITICAL

As we all know by now, sport and politics do mix. Ian Hamilton and Bert van Bedaf talk to a couple of famous left and right wingers - Gary Punch and Jeff Kennett.

It must be one of the great conundrums of all time - a Federal politician resigns from Parliament because, after twenty years in a divisive and rigidly partisan world, he's sick to death of it all - then promptly signs up for a prominent role in Australian soccer.

Gary Punch - explain yourself.

Australia's youngest ever mayor at 21, Punch then became the youngest member of Federal Parliament and the youngest minister since World War Two when given his first portfolio, Arts, by Bob Hawke in 1988.

He was one of the original 'mates' of the Labor Party's NSW right faction and a key player in Paul Keating's prime ministerial ascendancy. His fight against the third runway at Sydney airport put him at odds with his own kind and saw him resign from the ministry in protest. And after all that, still yet to turn 40, he's now the chairman of UTS Olympic.

For a senior administrative position in most sports, that sort of curriculum vitae would be more than enough, but then this sport is Australian soccer.

Known for other achievements, his soccer pedigree comes as a surprise.

While a keen player as a kid and citing Johnny Warren as his hero, Punch later married into a Hungarian family with links to founding NSL club St George Budapest. His father-in-law, he says, coached Hakoah (later to become Sydney City).

He became a patron of Sydney Olympic when St George folded, has a level 2A coaching certificate and has coached his son's junior team for the last four years.

At Olympic, he leads a new board including a consortium of ten Greek businessmen who have bailed out the club to the tune of \$500,000, retiring debt and plotting a new, more professional course. The new regime has high hopes for



sponsorship and corporate support, clinching a long-talked-of alliance with the Canterbury Bulldogs rugby league club.

As well as becoming chairman of UTS Olympic he is also a consultant to executive recruitment firm Morgan & Banks, pursuing business interests with his wife and studying law part-time.

Consultation and consensus loom large in the Punch vision laced with the same positive key words over and over. Ever the politician, he talks constantly of "capitalisation", "goodwill", "a total package".

"My role as chairman is very much about

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FOOTBALL

**Whatever
Victorians may
think of their
Premier after
four years in government —**

This should come as no surprise. Mr Kennett, who is the honorary executive of the Victorian Soccer Federation, is also South Melbourne's No.1 ticket holder. He gave them a new \$6.5 million stadium when he bulldozed their old one down to make way for the Grand Prix around Albert Lake.



**and opinions traverse the
emotional extremities — the
honourable Jeff Kennett can
do no wrong at South
Melbourne.**

Today, Lakeside stadium — or Bob Jane Stadium, named after the tyre king who paid \$1 million for the naming rights — is shaping up as the premier soccer ground in Victoria, prior to the building of a new stadium at either the docklands or showgrounds. The Kennett government provided \$3 million,

while South Melbourne raised the rest.

When the Premier opened the stadium in November last year, the 13,500 strong crowd, largely representative of the Greek community with whom Mr Kennett has a fond relationship, gave him a rousing ovation. Unfortunately, South Melbourne lost 3-2 to West Adelaide, which ruined the day of triumph.

Lakers president George Vasilopoulos readily paid tribute to Mr Kennett. "His association with South Melbourne as a supporter goes back to 1978 when he was Minister for Housing. He then helped us build a VIP room at our old ground.

"The new stadium is a trade-off. He needed the land for the Grand Prix. It was a good deal for both of us. It is a big improvement and everyone is very happy with it. Mr Kennett is well-respected by the Greek community."

Mr Kennett said his soccer interests were "borne out of affection for the game and trying to drive the sport towards a position of international pre-eminence. I'm trying to encourage greater attention being given to soccer by governments and by communities and hopefully to attract more media coverage of soccer."

The Premier said his affection for soccer was something he had been "coming to grips with" in the last 10 years. He had not played soccer in his youth. He is a long-time supporter of Australian rules football and No.1 ticket holder at the Hawthorn Football Club. "But I didn't play football very well either. I wasn't a performer," Mr Kennett explained.

When asked if he thought he'd been effective in his VSF role, Mr Kennett suggested, "That's for others to judge. I have assisted in raising the profile of soccer in Victoria and worked with some of the bodies within the state and nationally for the betterment (of soccer). I've been a strong advocate of and for soccer over the last few years and that does attract both local and national attention. It all helps drive soccer to the position we hope it will assume."

According to David Hill, chairman of

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uniting, but nothing beats hard work and goodwill," he says.

And these are things he believes are a little lacking in the so-called 'new age' of Australian soccer. The last-minute, pre-season battle over club logos is a case in point.

"If you want to broaden the base, the one thing you don't do is alienate the existing base. Logos were always going to be a tenth order issue. If Soccer Australia hadn't backed off, I think it had real potential to carve the game up. It was never a fight worth having," Punch maintains.

"Some of my criticisms of Soccer Australia are that there is too much piecemeal in the overall strategy. It has to be approached as a total package. And that can only be done if the sport is united and there is wall to wall goodwill."

Punch does little to hide his disdain for Hill and his 'crash through or crash' approach.

"David and I don't exchange Christmas cards," he says.

It's an enmity that dates back at least five years when rather than Australian soccer's saviour, for a while many saw Hill as the anti-Christ.

In 1991, Punch received a mayday call from the ASF's then chairman John Constantine and chief executive Ian Holmes. He got them in to see Graham Richardson (then Federal communications minister) in a desperate bid to overturn David Hill's decision as managing director of the ABC to dump soccer from the national broadcaster one year into a four-year contract. But that's another story.

"One of the problems with soccer in the past has been too much personality cult and we don't have the room for that. I think there needs to be far more consultation from David right across the board with the soccer community.

"I have seen the mistakes at a political level of what division can bring and how unity can bring the result."

So what does a Labor man think of that other larger-than-life personality and more natural political foe stamping his authority on the game in Victoria?

"Jeff's involvement and love of the game is very genuine and his impact on Victorian soccer has been significant. He's in the business of winning votes but if on the way, soccer gets a number of free kicks then I say he should be congratulated and encouraged - even if you don't vote for him.

"But let me reassure the soccer fraternity that the Labor Party is traditionally far more committed to soccer than the Liberals have been."

But for a Labor man, his prescription for the game sounds more like that of a corporate executive.

"What we have to do is go to the world, not just the business community here in Australia, and

in a prospectus-like fashion sell Australian soccer."

When it comes to his vision and how he would do it differently, like any good politician he has to be pressed to provide substance to his visionary statements.

"The real issue that Soccer Australia has got to address is the capitalisation of the sport. At a club level we have to change our equity base. That means private business and co-operative institutions investing in one way or another. There are plenty of options.

"The debate about the logos was characterised by the mistaken belief that the ethnic communities are a very small proportion of the Australian population. It's not right. In our [south-eastern Sydney] region, we have to reach out to the Lebanese and Arabic communities, the Italians, South Americans, South Pacific Islanders, the former Yugoslavians and the Asian community.

Punch rejects the conventional wisdom in some quarters that soccer's ethnic links are the reason the game has been held back.

"No, it's the reason that it's survived. What really irks me is when I look at the crowd scenes

"We [Olympic] are not going to take the first marriage proposal that comes along, no matter how good looking."

at the Sydney Swans matches with the SCG at capacity and I look at the [age and ethnic] demographic - they should be at a soccer match. I don't begrudge the Swans, I think they are absolutely fantastic as is the way they have managed the show. It is really five-star rating management.

"What we have to do here at Olympic is keep our Greek base but broaden the base of the team and the supporters to the Anglo-Celtic community but also the other non-English speaking background communities.

"We have to be singularly successful, because the new clubs and the ones that are mooted, are coming in with private backing and are going to be able to buy the very best players. The message for the old NSL clubs is clear - change or die.

"We have to be far more professional in terms of sponsorships and our movement to Belmore is absolutely crucial in that path. Belmore gives us more corporate boxes and season ticket holders

which helps our cash-flow and means we have money to spend on marketing."

Several attempts have been made to get into bed with the Canterbury Bulldogs over the year and now it's a reality. What Heidelberg have succeeded in doing with Collingwood is what UTS Olympic has tried to do before with the Bulldogs and failed.

The marriage with Canterbury is only a de facto one at this stage, much like a young couple moving in on a casual 'see how it goes' basis. The clubs will share the Bulldogs' facilities for three years, with a more formal equity partnership mulled over in the meantime. Canterbury has enlisted a senior partner of accounting firm KPMG to investigate investment in UTS Olympic.

"But we are not going to take the first marriage proposal that comes along, no matter how good looking."

Canterbury is looking at a multi-sport arrangement beyond just rugby league and soccer and if Punch has his way it might mean a menage-a-trois with netball.

The Bulldogs are Olympic's natural ally sporting the same colours, same drawing region and an ethnic following.

Punch positively drools as he talks of the treasures the alliance offers; a first-class club stadium and an acknowledged expertise in management, ticketing, promotion, scouting and junior development.

The Bulldog management under chief executive Peter "Bullfrog" Moore is the reason Canterbury, a club in an inner Sydney, less affluent area, has triumphed over the newer clubs where others like Newtown, Balmain and Southern Sydney have either failed or look like going out the back door.

Punch has a good idea of the future he wants to see and says there is not much time.

"Australian soccer has a very narrow window of opportunity - the 1998 World Cup, the 2000 Olympics, as well as the other junior international tournaments.

"From money grows the potential to do so many other things, and that is absolutely crucial to the progress of Australian soccer. Australians are no longer single-minded about their football codes. I watch the Swans, I watch St George rugby league as well as netball. Australians watch more than one sport and we have to tap into that attitude and take advantage of the fact that soccer is the only code being played in summer."

Punch doesn't deny he may look at involvement at the highest level in administration of the game, but adds quickly there are plenty of ambitions to be realised at club level first - and premiership is the first priority.

"If we don't win it this season, then I would want anyone to be in our way next year." ■

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soccer Australia. "Jeff Kennett is one of the most significant single supporters soccer has anywhere in Australia. Kennett's fair-dinkum. We both share a view that soccer has the potential to be more of a major mainstream sport than it's been."

But VSF chairman Henry Siwka has been less praiseworthy of the Premier's role, commenting, "If you want the kudos, you've so got to be prepared to do the work."

Perhaps Mr Siwka was referring to the internal struggles which have plagued the federation throughout the year, involving himself and others within the organisation. On these issues, Mr Kennett has been conspicuously silent.

Mr Kennett pointed out, "I am an honorary member, not an executive member. It would be wrong for me to get involved in what I would call the administration of the organisation. I am often called upon to arbitrate and the role of an honorary executive president would be at risk, if I got myself involved in the day-to-day operation (of the federation)."

Areas where the Premier has stated his opinions are the establishment of the Ericsson Cup league, the need for more professionalism at club level and the so-called ethnic issue.

He has backed Mr Hill on every point, convinced, like the Soccer Australia chairman, that for soccer to advance it must embrace the "mainstream" of Australian society and the media, and not restrict support to the non-Anglo-Saxon communities.

"The game has huge potential. It is the only international football game in the world and the challenge is to make Australian soccer internationally competitive. To do that you need a strong, viable club competition on a national basis for its premier league.

"You've got to ask yourself where you want soccer to be in five years or 10 years time. There's no point having a football code that is run and acting like a pack of amateurs, it's meant to be playing in a professional environment. I think some of the clubs throughout Australia have acted like amateurs. It doesn't just mean Victoria. I'm talking about the code generally and what David Hill and the board have been trying to do.

"What I have been supporting is the introduction of a professional approach in terms of the management of soccer in Australia. We will continue to lose all of our good players to international teams unless we can develop a highly professional game here. Generally speaking Hill got it right. No question about that."

On the ethnic issue Mr Kennett is equally unequivocal. "Most of our clubs have had their origins from sections of the community that are multicultural. That has been good. But it

also has its downsides. One of the downsides is that multiculturalism is directly equated with about 25 per cent of the population - 25 per cent of our community is of non-Anglo-Saxon background. Therefore 75 per cent are Anglo-Saxon Australians."

Mr Kennett went on, "Therefore, if you want soccer to stay as a small time code and satisfy the historical cultural ties of some groups within Australia, then leave it as it was. If, on the other hand, you want Australian soccer to one day win a World Cup then it has to be supported by the population regardless of its ethnicity. That doesn't stop Croatians, Greeks and Italians continuing to support their clubs. But we also need to attract other people who enjoy the game."

Mr Kennett believes the involvement of Australian rules clubs, such as Collingwood with Heidelberg United this Ericsson Cup season and Carlton fielding its own team next season, will widen support for soccer in Victoria. "AFL clubs are Australian by nature. They were borne out of Australians, not out of any section of Australians. If you look at the

"I won't be satisfied until we win a World Cup."

membership of AFL clubs, there are members of different ethnic community backgrounds. They're all in it."

Mr Kennett's immediate attention is on selecting a site for Victoria's now multi-purpose sports stadium, to accommodate Olympic soccer in Melbourne in the year 2000 when the Games are held in Sydney, and to help secure the 2006 Commonwealth Games for Melbourne.

The Premier knocked back a \$120 million proposal to renovate Olympic Park and is believed to favour the Docklands area over the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds as the preferred stadium site, with a decision imminent.

There are two major proposals before the government. The Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria wants a \$200 million sports stadium at the Showgrounds, while the Grollo company which is also building the massive Crown

Casino, has submitted plans for a 60,000 seat stadium, costing more than \$250 million. It will have a sliding roof and retractable seat to bring soccer and rugby spectators closer to the action.

"We need a new stadium that is suitable for soccer, rugby and Australian rules. It will contain hydraulic seating to change the shape of the oval within 20 minutes by drawing the seating backwards and forwards. I am waiting until I have all the information before I indicate my preference," Mr Kennett said.

"Melbourne will have a soccer component during the 2000 Olympics. It's all tied up with this new stadium. If we can get that off the ground, I'm sure Melbourne will host some of the soccer matches."

Mr Hill said, "Soccer is the only sport that will not be concentrated in Sydney. There need to be four cities hosting games. Victoria and Kennett have indicated they will be bidding in a big way to have Melbourne as one of the major venues. If Melbourne gets up (it is competing against Adelaide, Wollongong, Canberra and Brisbane), we'll not only have this stadium (at South Melbourne) but the Docklands as well."

He also said Melbourne would be one of the venues to host a four-nation tournament with the Socceroos next January. "Although at club level it has strong supporters whereas at national level it hasn't been (that way), we'll stick with Melbourne. We have scheduled a break in the Ericsson Cup (January 12 to 31) and Melbourne will be one of the venues."

Mr Kennett believes the Socceroos can reach the 1998 finals and perhaps one day win the World Cup. "I think we have a good chance of making the 1998 finals and I won't be satisfied until we win a World Cup. But you've got to have the strength of the competition back in Victoria and Australia to do it. We've just got to do the work until we've got the game where we want it to be, and winning a World Cup is the objective. Anything short of that is a waste of time and effort." ■



MY LIFE WITH ELVIS

It's every soccer player's dream to play for a major European club, but my chance to try out for Manchester City came in strange circumstances.

I got the message to call an agent when I was on holidays overseas during the Ericsson Cup off-season, so I actually found out about City's interest from a phone booth outside a McDonald's on a highway somewhere in Canada.

Unfortunately, because it was summer the flights to England were choc-a-block, so by the time I arrived Manchester City were playing some pre-season games in China. My agent arranged for me to train for a week with Grimsby, who are also in the First Division, while I waited for City to get back.

I found myself in pretty good company at Grimsby because Neil Webb, who'd played for Manchester United and England, was trialling there as well. They arranged for me to play in a game against Hartlepool on my first day, and after a three hour bus trip it was pouring rain and Kenny Swain, the assistant manager, told me he hadn't got a clearance for me to play.

So I sat there on the bench, it was miserable and I was freezing, and I'm thinking 'What am I doing here?'. I'd been on holidays on Waikiki Beach and on the Rocky Mountains in Canada, and now here I was in the rain at Hartlepool watching Grimsby play. Ironically the game was a 4-4 draw and it was the biggest cracker of a game you've ever seen.

I finally got a chance to play a couple of days later with Grimsby reserves at Coventry. We were all jammed into this

Being asked to trial with Manchester City sounds like an excellent adventure at the very least. For Paul Trimboli it meant pulling on the famous blue shirt, being lost in a mini-bus in the English midlands and a chance encounter with Elvis.

mini-bus being driven by the player-manager, Brian Laws, and he wasn't quite sure where we were going. We were going from one motorway to another and we arrived so late that we just had to get changed and go straight out and play.

During the game I played a one-two and I chased the ball into the box and slid in with the Coventry goalkeeper. As I looked up I realised it was John Filan, the goalie for the

I'd been on holidays on Waikiki Beach and on the Rocky Mountains in Canada, and now here I was in the rain at Hartlepool watching Grimsby play.

Olyroos in 1992, and he was so surprised to see me he nearly dropped the ball. He said, 'What are you doing here?'. I said, 'Johnny, I'm asking myself the same question, trust me'.

The bad news came when Kenny Swain called me over after the game and told me that Grimsby wouldn't be taking me on, and he was basically telling me that he didn't

think I was up to it. He absolutely slaughtered me - he told me I was a bit slow, a bit behind the pace of the game, and because I'm 27 he thought I was a lost cause. He said I'd struggle to get a game with Scunthorpe, who I'd never even heard of. That was a real confidence booster for my trial with Manchester City!

I arrived in Manchester and there was another guy there who was on trial at the same time. He'd been in Croatia's squad for Euro '96 although he hadn't played any games, and his name was Elvis, of all things - Elvis Brajkovic, and he played for 1860 Munich in the Bundesliga. I got to the training ground and no-one seemed to know what was going on. I'd already been told I couldn't get a gig with Scunthorpe, and before I knew it I was put in with the City reserves.

On my second day there Elvis and I were called in to see the manager. I was introduced to all the coaches and we had a bit of a chat and I was thinking 'This is better - at least now people know that I'm here'. Then I went back to training and they stuck me back in the reserves, and they put Elvis in with the first team! My enthusiasm was at an all-time high now, of course, but I thought I might as well get some fitness in.

In the end I made my debut for Manchester City reserves in the glamorous

surroundings of Nantwich United and there were about 20 people there. We had the full kit on - it's a really nice blue, by the way - so we looked the goods, but the ground was so bumpy you couldn't control the ball. I got about five touches in the first half but I eventually got into the game a bit more.

The next day I saw Elvis play in a training session with the first team and he was like a fish out of water. He was trying to play it around at the back and everyone was yelling at him to belt it. We sat back at the hotel afterwards, thinking that this was a shambles. I think Elvis had been under the impression that he was going to Manchester United, not City!

At training I'd counted how many players were in the first team squad. There were 26 there, and I still couldn't get into the squad so it was pretty frustrating. Meanwhile another game was lined up for the reserves against Leek Town and Elvis and I were both picked.

Elvis didn't want to play in the game, because he was thinking 'Either they offer me a contract or they don't'. He'd seen the bumpy pitches in these reserve games and he was hoping his playing permit wasn't going to come through in time. Meanwhile I'd decided that I was just going to enjoy myself and play my own game. I did alright, I set up a goal and had a couple of shots, but poor old Elvis had a shocker.

The next day Elvis and I went to see the manager, Alan Ball, to see if we were wasting our time being there. Alan was really good - he said I had good technique, good vision and good skills, but he thought that with the way the game is played in England I'd struggle to get into the game, because it's so physical.

So I left Alan Ball's office and Elvis went in, and he came straight out 30 seconds later. I don't think Elvis wanted to play for Manchester City anyway - not the way they play - and I think he was thinking 'Why should I stay here in this horrible place killing myself when I can go and play in Spain' or wherever.

Elvis had been wanting to keep his options open, so he'd been telling everyone who called him on his mobile phone that he was still in Croatia. He had about 20 agents calling him at his home in Croatia, and his mum would tell them that he was down at the shops and to call him on his mobile!

He'd get calls from the Croatian striker Davor Suker, who was teeing up deals for his international team-mates during his spare time from Real Madrid, and he organised a trial for Elvis with Celta Vigo in the Spanish first division.

It was great to have Elvis there during the trial, actually. We clung to each other a



bit in Manchester because we didn't know anyone else, and it was good to have some company at dinner or to go and see a film or play pinball, which Elvis was in love with.

There was an Addams Family pinball machine in the pub next door (the theme music drove me crazy). He dragged me there every day and he never beat me once. I'm not a great pinball player, but Elvis was hopeless. He kept ploughing money in because he wanted to beat me, but it never happened. Maybe there aren't many pinball machines in Croatia.

Overall I'm quite happy to be back home in Melbourne, although it was a great experience to try out in England. I went to some great games while I was over there - Manchester United v Inter Milan, Everton v Newcastle, Grimsby reserves against Hartlepool - and I also managed to catch up with some of my Australian mates.

They were everywhere. I met up with John Filan, of course, Harry Kewell, who's doing so well with Leeds, and my old South Melbourne team-mates Kevin Muscat and Steve Mautone, who are both doing really well with Crystal Palace and West Ham.

Steve, in particular, is really enjoying himself - it's a real cinderella story. He was on loan to Canberra, things didn't work out at South Melbourne, he'd been injured, he was almost at the crossroads. Now he's on the bench every week for West Ham and it's a glamorous life in the English Premier League. He's played a couple of games in the senior team too, so he's loving it.

I take my hat off to any of the boys who are playing in England, because it's a pretty ruthless environment and you're over there on your own. I think Elvis would agree with that.

I haven't spoken to Elvis since I got back to Australia, but I've heard that he's training with his home-town club Rijeka in Croatia. Apparently Hajduk Split have shown some interest in him, although nothing's been confirmed.

Elvis, if you're reading this and you still haven't found a club, why not come on down to South Melbourne? We could always use another quality squad member. The money's probably not what you were looking for, but there are plenty of pinball machines here and I promise I'd let you beat me at least once. Well, probably. ■

KIMON THE

Kimon Taliadoros is a trouble maker. Just ask the photographer from a Melbourne newspaper who's arrived at Victoria Park for a photo shoot and found Taliadoros unable to locate a pair of boots. The photographer soldiers on, snapping from the ankles up to start with,

Collingwood Warriors have turned to Kimon Taliadoros to lead them in their debut Ericsson Cup campaign. Patrick Mangan spoke to the experienced striker.

players' union he's become well known as a tough negotiator, and his frequent changing

of clubs - he's now with his fourth team in four years - is evidence of someone who doesn't always see eye to eye with the establishment. There's no antipathy in the air these days, though, as the debonair striker finds himself charged with the responsibility of captaining A-League new boys, Collingwood Warriors. Taliadoros seems relaxed and comfortable, sitting in the Ryder Stand overlooking his new home ground, contemplating his latest role as a footballing pioneer with the fledgling club.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for me to be

motivated Zoran Matic (the Warriors' co to move to Melbourne too. He's very frustrated, like many other people, that soccer in Australia hasn't even started to reach its potential.

"The junior federations are thriving and I think there is unprecedented interest in the game at every level. There's still a fair degree of scepticism, but there's a genuine level of interest, particularly commercial interest, and I think that because of that the game will be obliged to progress.

"If clubs want to be part of the future of the game, they have to embrace the future and that means difficult decisions. It means change, whatever that may prove to be. Collingwood represents that change."

Victoria Park is a sacred site to many Melburnians, and the antiquated stadium which has seen 14 VFL/AFL premiership flags raised in its hundred year existence casts a large shadow over the newborn soccer team.

The legendary names in Collingwood proud history line the roofs of the stands, and it's hard to imagine Jock McHale or Richards deftly glancing a header at the post or going on a shimmying run up the touchline under the Bob Rose Stand.

Do the Warriors feel like imposters in this famous working class suburb? Not Kimon. "Collingwood Warriors probably don't represent the history of the Collingwood Football Club, but more so the future. I think the only link with a hundred years of Collingwood heritage is the fanaticism and the devotion of the supporters to the football club and hopefully to the soccer club. I think that will be the thread that binds the two.

"The decisions being made by Collingwood and Carlton (in 1997/98) to field soccer teams are in their best interests. It certainly isn't a benevolent contribution to the future of Australian soccer," Taliadoros smiles. "They clearly have their own best interests at heart and they're making



Taliadoros in full flight against Melbourne Knights' Ransford Banini.

and by Saturday a barefoot but regal Warriors recruit adorns the sports pages.

Of course Taliadoros is no stranger to controversy. In his years at the head of the

involved in a venture that I believe will take soccer to the next level," explains the former South Melbourne, Marconi and UTS Olympic forward. "I know that's what

WARRIOR

responsible financial decisions. They've recognised the benefits that soccer offers and, by the same token, there are enormous benefits for Australian soccer as well."

In Europe, several major soccer clubs also field teams in other sports, most notably Real Madrid, Barcelona, Olympiakos and Panathinaikos in the European basketball league.

There's no obvious reason why various sports shouldn't happily co-exist. But try telling that to the recently retired AFL Chief Executive, Ross Oakley, who pulled out all stops in a frenzied attempt to scuttle Collingwood's move into soccer. Oakley and the AFL's endeavours must have been frustrating for both the Magpies and the Warriors.

"I think, if anything, it strengthens Collingwood's determination to ensure that their right to run a soccer club isn't influenced by the AFL," says Taliadoros in typically measured tones. "And it's given us all the more confidence that the Collingwood Football Club is absolutely committed to the whole process."

"The Collingwood Soccer Club has the opportunity to take the Collingwood name throughout the world, especially Asia where obviously Australia's economic future lies. There are many reasons why it's in AFL clubs' best interests to be involved in soccer."

"The sports are complementary, I mean, look at the grounds," he points to the freshly marked soccer pitch on the famous turf. "They're versatile enough to be multi-purpose stadiums. That's just one of the synergies, not to mention the administration and the sponsorship issues. And the Australian soccer season is played in summer - totally complementary."

In a local sports environment where Australian rules football is so prominent, it's understandable that the general media focus for the new soccer venture has been on the 'Collingwood' perspective. But you need only travel to Victoria Park to see the Warriors in action to get an idea of how many supporters of the other merger partner, Heidelberg United, are getting behind the new club.

Heidelberg (then known as Fitzroy

United Alexander) was one of the founder members of the national league in 1977, enjoying success in the early years with a team packed with Socceroos - Gary Cole, Jim Tansey, Yakka Banovic and Charlie Yankos, for example. They won the Top Four Championship in 1980 crushing the now-defunct Sydney City 4-0 in the final, but that proved to be the pinnacle of the club's achievements.

As the years progressed Heidelberg United withered, and by 1995 they were playing, and often losing, at their somewhat depressing Olympic Village ground in front of ever-dwindling crowds of a couple of thousand. The writing was on the wall. Then the newly-elected chairman of Soccer Australia, David Hill, set the tone for his reign by unceremoniously dumping Heidelberg and two other struggling clubs from the league. Clearly a new approach was needed to ensure United's survival in one form or another.

Enter the Collingwood Warriors, a club attempting to walk the tightrope between encouraging a new generation of Australian soccer fans to embrace the recently-established team, and avoiding alienating the thousands of Heidelberg supporters who still, rightly, feel a sense of ownership of the Victoria Park club.

The Warriors captain acknowledges the complications. "I think ownership is the key word," he says thoughtfully. "This transitional stage is difficult, but it's clearly an objective of the Collingwood Warriors Soccer Club to establish itself as a new entity and as symbolic of the future of Victorian and Australian soccer."

"I hope that Heidelberg supporters can identify with the Collingwood Warriors, but Collingwood is a new club, with a new direction and a corresponding new supporter base as well. Not to the exclusion of those that support soccer at Heidelberg," he adds.

For Kimon, the Warriors venture represents the latest challenge in his varied career on and off the park. His playing career with four high-profile clubs, although not without its low points, has been highly successful. He's also seen the Players' Association gradually stamp out a place for

itself in Australian soccer's decision-making processes during its three year existence. And he's been studying for a Masters of Business Administration recently, just to keep himself occupied in his spare time.

"I've been privileged enough to have the opportunity to play soccer at this level," says the 1991/92 national league top scorer, "but playing professional football overseas has never really appealed to me to the extent that it might have appealed to others. I've enjoyed being involved in the Players' Association, university, various jobs that I've had, and I've always believed that leading a balanced life is important. I'm happy with the decisions that I've made."

Whatever happens to Taliadoros in the future, it'll be hard pressed to top the elation of South Melbourne's 1991 championship victory, which he nominates without hesitation as the highlight of his football life. "The moment when Joe Palatsides scored the equaliser against the Melbourne Knights (South Melbourne won on penalties after a 1-1 draw) - it's difficult to remember any time in my life when I've felt such euphoria. That one moment was unique. I barely even remember the rest of the match and the penalties, as dramatic as they were. It was a remarkable night.....remarkable."

The Warriors skipper, optimist that he is, wouldn't rule out the possibility of his new club conjuring up a moment to rival South Melbourne's triumph. One hundred years of football tradition surround him at his new home, and the lessons of history are there to be learnt. Collingwood's 1990 AFL premiership victory after a 32 year drought, for instance, serves as a reminder to Kimon and his team-mates that anything is possible. Even soccer at Victoria Park. ■

Kimon Taliadoros **FACT FILE**

Date of birth: 28 March 1968

Height: 184cm

Weight: 76

Goals scored in national league: 75

Appearances for Australia: 18

Goals for Australia: 8

BOSNICH AND KALAC

A TALE OF TWO
KEEPERS

It's been a tumultuous season so far for Soccerroo Mark Bosnich. His infamous John Cleese-inspired Nazi salute to Tottenham supporters got him into more hot water than he would have dreamed possible.

Before you could say 'Don't mention the war', everyone was getting the boots stuck into the Aston Villa star. The tabloid press had a field day, of course, and criticism of the Australian was officially tabled in British Parliament.

No-one, least of all Bosnich, needs to be reminded of what a foolish and offensive gesture it was. The Australian keeper has apologised and shown genuine remorse on numerous occasions since for his indiscretion, and he no doubt bitterly regrets the incident. But even before the White Hart Lane controversy, the young goalkeeper had been having a difficult season.

The 1996/97 Premier League campaign began with Bosnich on the sidelines. Lateral ligament damage to his left knee forced the high profile No. 1 on to the trainer's bench. And he felt the pinch.

Last season was exceptional for Bosnich. His heroics in Aston Villa's Coca-Cola Cup run earlier this year led to a second winners' medal in the competition, allowing entry to the vast exposure and wealth tied to European contests. A fourth place in the domestic championship buoyed his hopes of further achievement and

Australia's two most highly-rated goalkeepers have had different challenges to face lately. Optus Vision's Robert Wheatley spoke to Mark Bosnich and Zeljko Kalac about life in the cut-throat English league.

rekindled a \$6 million offer from Scottish giants Celtic for his services.

"I can't complain," said Bosnich during the lay-off period. "I've made over 200 League and Cup appearances and this is my first major problem. Some players never reach these heights, but I want to get it 100% right before returning. It's a long season. Even until April the three points for a win allow significant changes to take place."

Adding heat to the enforced omission of Bosnich was the form of Villa understudy and England U-21 goalkeeper, Michael Oakes. Nominated in the Premiership team of the year, albeit after only eight rounds, Oakes recorded four clean sheets conceding only five goals in seven games prior to a loss in a 4-3 thriller at St James' Park. "The boy did an excellent job and it made my absence lot easier," said the Soccerroo keeper of his understudy.

Bosnich's reaction to such genuine competition is unexpected, but it underlines the cocoon of confidence that emanates from his status as one of the best goalkeepers in Europe. But while Mark Bosnich has reappeared in the

Villa goal, the man they call Spider – Zeljko Kalac – still wonders why he is not plying his trade in similar Premier League surroundings.

Kalac left Australia in a blaze of publicity last year after a record \$1.7 million transfer from Sydney United to English first division side Leicester City, but injuries and indifferent displays in his first couple of games for the club hampered his progress.

Before an unprecedented unbeaten run that culminated in Leicester's amazing post-season play-offs and promotion to the Premier League, Kalac had made only the two first team appearances. By this time the manager who bought Kalac, Mark McGhee, had moved on to greener pastures with Wolverhampton Wanderers and been replaced by Martin O'Neill.

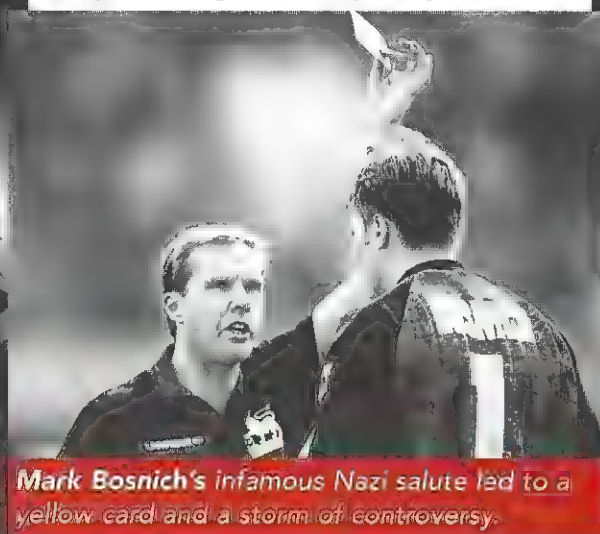
O'Neill liked what he saw in Kalac's performances. "I don't know who the hell you are, but I'm impressed," Kalac was told by his Irish boss.

"The only thing that kept me out of first team football was the form of the side when



the side. That's the right attitude."

For today's professional player the right attitude seems almost permanently aligned to negotiating the right contract and conditions. Zeljko Kalac agrees. "Money wise you have to



Mark Bosnich's infamous Nazi salute led to a yellow card and a storm of controversy.

go (overseas). In England you can earn really good money. Europe is not as big as people think. My move to Leicester was a great offer. While it's been a bad year it's been a good financial year."

Millionaire Mark Bosnich agrees when quizzed on the possible incentives at stake. Individual success secured, Bosnich has directed his goals to a higher plane.

"Europe is a showcase for clubs and players. Our (Aston Villa's) loss to Helsingborgs (UEFA Cup Round 1) was a disaster. A club like Aston Villa must be there. Incredible dollars and prestige were at stake."

Early European exits for Aston Villa and Arsenal and the departure of early season pacesetters Sheffield Wednesday from the Coca Cola Cup will prove costly for those clubs. But nowhere near as costly as some of the players drawn like a magnet to the English game.

Bosnich highlights the major talking point in England at present which centres around the imports – relatively cheaply-priced talent arriving from all points of the globe. "There is so much controversy over British players' positions being taken by imports. Many people claim it's suffocating their chances."

Does Bosnich feel that the lifeline has been cut for Aussies to pursue overseas careers? "I still believe if you are good enough you will make it. Look at Lazaridis (West Ham) - he's killing it. The problem now is that home grown players in Division 1, for example, now have their clubs looking for a \$5 million transfer – you're kidding, they're not worth it."

Bosnich is quick to add that Kalac was unfortunate not to snare a permanent place overseas. The club dispute, the caps controversy and not having EEC connections was disappointing.



What remains clear from both is the desire for national team exposure. "It's a priority for me," said Bosnich. "I know it's still a dream for all players. And it's so critical to the game in Australia and its profile."

Few could argue the reciprocal benefits of key players in the class of Mark Bosnich and Zeljko Kalac pushing each other from opposite ends of the globe. The net result is nothing but positive for round ball lovers in Birmingham... or Sydney. ■

won 10 out of our last 11 games," said Kalac.

The giant keeper returned to Australia to recuperate after taking seven months to adjust to the testing demands of full-time training, soft surfaces and a quicker game. Hopes of a return were shattered by a brief letter from the Leicester club secretary.

For Kalac the rebuff was heartbreaking. "No official answer from the PFA (Professional Footballers Association), no good reasons. It's a joke. Is it my fault for being born in Australia?"

The sting in Kalac's tone soon evaporates as the two time national league 'Goalkeeper of the Year' contemplates the upcoming Ericsson Cup season with Sydney United, the club he's recently rejoined.

"Mate, we've got a hell of a side here. Our new imports have given a depth to this side we've never had before. This season we have everything all over the park."

The injury to Mark Bosnich and the re-signing of Kalac re-focused the recently retired national coach Eddie Thomson's sights on who would be his first choice in the Socceroo goal.

"It's so good to feel that he chose me when so many keepers in Europe and at home were playing so well," said Kalac. "Thommo was always a good supporter of anyone who did well for him."

That reciprocal relationship between manager and player is critical in Kalac's eyes. "They say you perform better under pressure. That's wrong in my books. If a manager has got faith in you it means you're straight back in



Zeljko Kalac



Socceroo Kevin Muscat has made an immediate impact in England after his recent move from South Melbourne.

Ray Gatt spoke to the defender about his new life with Crystal Palace.

Muscat realises only too well that Lady Luck has been a little on his side in that regard. "I guess I didn't know what to expect when I got here," he said. "I thought it would take a little time to force my way into the firsts, but I was fortunate that (Palace manager) Dave Bassett has kept an eye on my career."

It was Bassett who tried to lure the former Young Socceroos captain to

"Obviously the pace is a lot quicker. It's a real step-up. As well, you get to play a lot of games in such a short period of time and I'm wondering how I'll be coping later in the season. Still, my fitness is getting a lot better because we train nearly every day."

Normally a sweeper, central defender or rightback, Muscat is now playing as a leftback with Palace. "It's not my position, but, as every player will tell you, you'll play anywhere as long as you are in the side," Muscat added.

"Actually, I don't mind playing there as I don't seem to be getting into as much trouble with the referees as I used to back home."

In fact, Muscat has been booked just once – for kicking the ball away – and it would seem the new environment has done something for his aggressive style of play.

"I don't think I was that bad back home," he said. "Maybe the referees were too harsh. Certainly I think they were looking out for me a lot because of my so-called reputation."

Muscat said the standard of the English first division is "quite high". "There are some good teams here with plenty of quality and skill and I would say our top national league teams would probably finish mid-table," he said.

Off the field, Muscat is enjoying the lifestyle

He might be struggling a little with homesickness, minus his girlfriend, living alone in new environment and playing out of position, but life couldn't be better for young Australian Kevin Muscat.

Muscat mightn't have the same high profile of some of the other European-based players like Paul Okon, Ned Zelic, Graham Arnold and Aurelio Vidmar, but he is doing quite well for himself, thank you very much, in one of the toughest competitions in the world.

Not surprisingly, the English first division is holding little or no fears for the Victorian, who has made his mark with Crystal Palace.

In a short space of time, Muscat has already stamped himself a regular with Palace, and not only is he proving himself a reliable and strong defender, he has also managed to figure regularly on the scoresheet. And, as you would expect, the triple-Australian representative is loving every minute.

"Everything is fine," he told Soccer Australia recently. "I hope I don't put the mock on myself, but I couldn't be happier. Everything seems to have fallen into place for me.

"The club is terrific, the fans are great and, honestly, I couldn't ask for much more."

It's little wonder he is over the moon, given that young Australian soccer players, no matter their reputation, usually face a tough initiation into English football. They are usually made to serve their apprenticeship in the lower grade and only given rare time in the top team as a late substitute or in friendly matches.

AUSSIE AT THE PALACE

Sheffield United originally. He wanted to sign the tough-as-teak defender but the deal, and Kevin's hopes of playing in England, were dashed when Bassett parted with Sheffield. However, one of his first moves when he took the job at Palace was to secure the Australian's signature.

And it fulfilled a long-time dream for Muscat, who had trialled in England with Bolton and West Bromwich Albion when he was 18.

English-born Muscat (he arrived in Australia with his parents when he was one) had always set his sights on playing there. "I thought eventually I might end up in England... it had always been in my plans," he said.

Now that he has made it to England, Muscat is confident he will become a much better player. "I think I've adapted to the game here," he said.

He is renting a place and is living on his own, though he says he tries to keep up with a lot of the Australian players based over there.

"Jimmy Tsekis (West Adelaide) was here for a couple of days as was Joe Spiteri (Melbourne Knights) who was trialling with Queens Park Rangers last I heard.

"But I don't mind being on my own. I like the space and freedom." With so many Australians, such as Andrew Bernal, Carl Veart, Steve Corica and Stuart Lovell to mention but a few, scattered through the first division, Muscat said there will be plenty of opportunities for them all to get together.

"Andrew Bernal was talking the other week (getting together for a few drinks and dinner and that would be great," he added. ■

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LATIN

Latin America is the acknowledged birthplace of that special brand of attacking football that excites the world's fans. But the South Americans still cannot shake off the one enemy that has slowed their progress for decades – football violence. **Philip Micallef** reports.

It was late on a bitterly cold winter's night in Montevideo . . . but passions were running hot in the old capital of Uruguay. The national team had just won the 1995 Copa America after a shootout victory over arch-rivals Brazil at the historic Centenario Stadium.

Thousands of jubilant men, women and children took to the street to celebrate yet another major achievement of their beloved 'Celestos'. The city's main street was crammed with singing, flag-waving, horn-blowing and drum-beating people from all walks of life. The more daring hung dangerously from tall monuments as the popular 'Sol Celeste' chant filled the air.

But this unabashed expression of sheer

pride and joy came to a very abrupt and nasty end. People suddenly started running in all directions as though their lives depended on it, as armoured cars, mounted police and machine-gun-toting soldiers came to break up the celebration.

It transpired that some youths had taken advantage of the hysteria and started looting some shops in the area while a group of hooligans apparently threw rocks at the hotel in which FIFA president Joao Havelange was staying. This is when authority made its move.

Several demonstrators reacted to this break-up of a justified demonstration by throwing bottles and other objects at the police and the armoured cars responded by showering their assailants with jets of water.

SOCCER



Diego Maradona - another South American all-time great.

SOUTH AMERICA'S DARK SIDE

Fortunately no shots were fired.

In minutes the scene of such happiness and jubilation had turned into one resembling a battleground with broken grass and debris everywhere. A great and memorable day had turned sour. Welcome to Latin America.

It is very hard for Europeans and the rest of the western world to understand the mentality and attitude of many South and Central American sports fans. This part of the world has yielded some of the wildest scenes one can imagine on a football field. Honduras and El Salvador even went to war after having problems in a qualifying match for the 1970 World Cup.

The torrid 1962 World Cup clash

between Chile and Italy will always be remembered as the Battle of Santiago, in which both sets of players were more intent on playing the man than the ball.

World club championship confrontations in the 1960s between Santos and Milan, Racing Club and Glasgow Celtic, Estudiantes and Manchester United as well as Estudiantes and Milan were such

ugly affairs that the annual play-off between Europe's and South America's champions was on the brink of being abolished until Japan stepped in with the Toyota Cup in the 1970s.

The Copa Libertadores, South America's equivalent to the European Cup, has a history of football excellence but also one of brutality. While Santos of Brazil and Penarol of Uruguay raised the competition's profile worldwide with the exploits of players like Gilmar, Didi, Pele, Coutinho, Pedro Rocha and Alberto Spencer, Estudiantes and Racing of Argentina did much to spoil that reputation with their blatant thuggery at home and abroad.

For a time 'South America', unfairly, was

synonymous with all that is bad and ugly in football.

This begs the questions:

Why is the typical South American sportsman or fan perceived as a hot-head who can't control his temper?

What causes a far greater incidence of violence in South American football than in any other part of the world?

The root to all this evil can

Colobiam Faustino Asprilla has made his fortune in the major European league.



Barcelona recently paid \$26 million **Ronaldo** of Brazil.



Latin

be traced back to the area's political volatility. The New World has been plagued with political unrest, economic depression, military dictatorships, drugs and crime for decades. In the 60s and 70s coup d'etats were as common as

Soccer

changes of government in Italy or summer cyclones in Queensland. Millions of

football: the prosaic and the poetic. European teams were the prose: premeditated, systematic and collective. South Americans were the poetry: spontaneous, individual and erotic.

The New World is a special den of sporting machismo and virtuosity that has produced some of the greatest soccer teams and players. Latin aficionados are the

world's most devoted and fanatical fans, leaving the Europeans way behind. But how has this South

American temperament affected its football?

If the international successes achieved by Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay and their clubs can be attributed to their zest

for the so-called 'futbol ballado', how many

more trophies would they have earned had they managed to curb their notorious temperament?

South America's football history is full of wonderful moments

that have become part of the world game's rich folklore. It is also no coincidence that unquestionably the world's three greatest players were South American: Alfredo Di Stefano, Pele and Diego Maradona.

But it is a measure of the huge problems facing South American football that those great Brazilian sides were never able to build on their success because of severe shortcomings on the domestic front.

The World Cup has always been a showcase for wealthy European clubs eager to grab star players cheaply. The exodus of South American players after each world championship has not abated since the first series in Uruguay in 1930.

Brazilian stars – and those from Argentina, Uruguay and Colombia for that matter – have little incentive to play out their career at home. They are expected to play an extraordinary number of matches at sub-standard venues by their cash-strapped clubs, whose only aim is to raise stars and sell them off to Europe.

Add to this the traditional hostility shown by fans in an increasingly volatile environment, and one can understand why many stars or would-be stars choose to earn their living in the better organised surroundings on the other side of the Atlantic.

Only last month former Brazil great Gerson, now a television commentator, was calling for authorities to stamp out the despicable thuggery and violence that has reached new depths in the football fields of Rio and Sao Paulo.

National coach Mario Zagallo, quite alarmingly when one thinks about it, has even advised gifted players to cut down on their dribbling in order to save their legs from the hatchet men that have infiltrated the

Brazilian league. Asking a South

American star not to use a skill that comes naturally to him

is like telling a German utility player to stop

running and tackling. It is utterly wrong

and unfair to paint the game in South

America in all the darkest possible

colors. For most of the world the football

emanating from Brazil and Argentina, and to a

lesser extent from Uruguay and

Colombia, is of the highest order,

based on individual skill and attack.

Brazilian and Argentinian players are currently plying their trade just about everywhere and Brazilian coaches are still in great demand all over the world.

When Brazil and Argentina tried to 'Europeanise' their game in the 70s and 80s to suit the demands of modern football, the outcry that followed was universal, not least from those fans who did not wish to see a special brand of exciting, attacking football disappear.

Not for nothing have Brazil won the World Cup four times, as well as being the only country to win the event outside their own continent (1958 in Sweden). Not for nothing have South American clubs often beaten their European counterparts in the annual world club championship matches.

But the over-riding factor behind all this is that the South Americans have only themselves – or their circumstances – to blame for not doing much, much better. ■



people consequently grew up in an environment of frustration and deprivation. Only a few people could afford the luxuries enjoyed in other more affluent parts of the world. South Americans' anxieties often flowed on to the football field... with explosive effect.

For them football is a means of brightening up their sometimes miserable lives. It gives fans a chance to forget – albeit for a short time – their daily misfortunes and it affords gifted players a chance to emerge from the squalor and earn a good living.

Millions of children in the major cities of Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Buenos Aires do it tough and must grow to learn how to fend for themselves. Perhaps this is why South American footballers tend to be more individualistic and less likely to play as a team than the Europeans.

If, as kids, they can survive in a world of poverty, exploitation and crime, surely taking on a couple of defenders in a restricted space would be a piece of cake by comparison! Who needs a team-mate to get within striking distance?

Italian film-maker Pier Paolo Pasolini once said that there were two types of

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DE CITY



David Hill's threat to expel Melbourne Knights, Marconi, Sydney United and possibly Adelaide City unless they changed the colors of their logos was the latest and most extreme example of the social engineering at work in soccer over the past 25 years or more. The clubs won, of course. Traditional colours remain on their logos. Marconi's "Italian" colours are eminently more pronounced than they were previously. Melbourne Knights added blue to their original red and white, producing the red, white and blue configuration that is even more distinctively Croatian than the previous colour scheme.

All Hill achieved was to remind the Australian community that Marconi and Adelaide City are supported by Italians and the Melbourne Knights and Sydney United by Croats. As a direct result of his expulsion threat, everyone now also knows that red and white are associated with Croatia and red, green and white with Italy. The issue created outrage in the Italian and Croatian communities, as well as the Greek community, for many South Melbourne supporters are still fuming over having now lost their traditional logo colours of blue and white, as well as having earlier been stripped of their club name, Hellas.

Hill is the latest of countless Anglo-Saxons peddling the line that Australian soccer can succeed only if it also turns overtly Anglo-Saxon. He claims the non Anglo-Saxon clubs have "symbolic barriers to the average Australian who potentially might support soccer".

The impression Hill and his ilk create is that southern Europeans have somehow conspired to keep Anglo-Saxons out of soccer.

The truth is that clubs of Greek, Italian, Croatian, Maltese, Macedonian, Dutch, Serbian, Polish or any other persuasion are delighted to have people of any nationality attend their matches and get involved in their activities.

It is utterly perverse to expect such clubs to apologise for their heritage simply because some nebulous classification of "mainstream" Australian finds it somehow unacceptable to watch soccer in the company of the people who make the game tick in this country.

Those who stay away from soccer in Australia have no problem watching it when they visit England, Italy, Holland, Germany, Greece, even though they encounter more

LOGO

It might just be a badge on a shirt to some, but to Soccer Australia it was reason enough to threaten four rebellious clubs with expulsion from the national league. Laurie Schwab gives his view on the logos controversy.

"ethnics" over there than they can shake a stick at.

Rather than being obsessed with eradicating the visible signs of Australian soccer's internationalism, Hill and his cronies should be shouting it to the rooftops, promoting television advertising that equates Paul Trimboli, Mike Petersen, Alex Kuzmanovic with the best of Panathinaikos; Andy Harper, Craig Foster, Dominic Longo with the best of Real Madrid.

Australian soccer has never marketed itself professionally to the audience that supports it or that potentially might support it - the hundreds of thousands of Australians who have soccer in their bloodlines. Instead, the marketing is aimed at those who do not support soccer but are enamored instead by Australian rules, rugby league, basketball.

"Ethnic" supporters and clubs are the strength of soccer in this country and district-based clubs have a sad history of failure at top level - Blacktown, Penrith, Canberra City, Newcastle KB United, Newcastle Rosebud and more. Soccer Australia should be trying to integrate the so-called "mainstream" into soccer's power base and allowing metamorphosis to occur naturally, rather than eroding the very basis of the game's strength.

Let us remember that it was the xenophobic nature of Australian soccer that caused "ethnic" clubs to spring up in the first place.

The soccer writer J. O. Wilshaw obviously represented the view of many - otherwise how would this have made it into print - when he wrote in the 'Sporting Globe' in 1950:

"The whole question of these new Australians being allowed to form National

clubs should be the subject of special investigation and although one does not advocate a boycott of these recent arrivals from the playing fields, it certainly would be much better if they were assimilated into the ranks of teams mainly of British stock and thus become better 'mixers' instead of keeping to themselves and in some cases endeavoring to settle political differences on the football field."

Two years later, Wilshaw wrote: "Just when the New Australians had given some evidence of having fallen in line with the ethics of sportsmanship that has prevailed in Victorian soccer for a generation before they came, there was another outburst by spectators at the close of the Brighton v Juventus game..."

Clearly, the establishment was dealing with an alien force which it would resist by whatever means were available. Those means included deprivation, vilification and misrepresentation. The status quo would remain and the mere suggestion of embracing these "aliens" was vigorously rejected.

The forces that manifested themselves in Wilshaw's racist ramblings took on a variety of incarnations over the decades. Clubs were forced to change their names, for instance, with the result that more than 90 per cent of Australian clubs have district names - often with "United" or "City" tagged on the end, for British is not seen as ethnic - and virtually none of them has any support to speak of.

Over the years, clubs accepted name changes in the hope that one day they would benefit from the financial windfall that supposedly would flow from social homogenisation. So far, it has not happened. The national league of the 1970s and 1980s



had commercial television and naming rights sponsors despite ethnic names. Crowds used to be much larger and Australia reached its one and only World Cup finals in 1974, at a time when it made only token excuses for its soccer identity.

Thankfully, some clubs are still successful because they have succeeded in remaining true to their markets. As Coca-Cola will tell you, branding is important in the marketplace but Hill threatened nevertheless to expel clubs that protected their branding.

The clubs did not object to modernising their logos in line with Soccer Australia's new merchandising plan. What they did object to was having their traditional colours eradicated - and it was on that battleground that the clubs, with the weight of legal opinion on their side, won their fight.

How ludicrous it was to even contemplate a national league without Marconi, the Knights, Sydney United and Adelaide City, for cutting those clubs out of the league would also have cost the league the support of the vast Italian and Croatian communities. Moreover, the expulsions would have reduced the national league to 11 clubs, whereas constitutionally, it must comprise at least 12.

NSW Premier Bob Carr, South Australian Opposition Leader Mike Rann, federal MP Janice Crosio, four former Socceroo captains and various prominent players were among those who expressed outrage over Hill's threat to expel the clubs.

Charlie Yankos said Hill and his board had "lost the plot - if they ever had it to start with. They are becoming more and more of a joke and the general public is getting pissed off," Yankos said at the height of the stand-off.

Yankos, manager of the sprawling MacArthur Square shopping complex at Campbelltown in Sydney, said merchandising plans were not driven by the shape or colour of logos but rather the promotion of star players.

"Kids will buy the No 23 shirt of the Chicago Bulls because it's the number worn by

Michael Jordan," Yankos said. "Here, they want to cut the biggest stars right out of the league."

Yankos said Soccer Australia failed more than 10 years ago with a similar marketing plan designed around American-style logos. "Stores will run with the merchandise for a couple of months, find it doesn't sell and drop it because it takes up valuable floor space. And to forsake their heritage, the clubs are to get a measly \$8000 each a year," he said.

"Why not concentrate on something that's really going to take the game forward, rather than causing it damage? I love the game but I keep away because the people at the top handle it so badly. The instability and animosity between federation and clubs causes potential sponsors and supporters to seriously question whether it's worth getting involved in the game."

Mark Viduka, who was twice the national league's best player and top scorer and now plays in Croatia, said: "Making clubs change the colours of their logos is like asking Collingwood to change to pink. Without the clubs that are being kicked out, Australian soccer will have the worst league in history."

Former youth international and Sunshine-George Cross star Lorenz Kindtner, now based in Belgium, said once the word spread to Europe, Australian soccer would be an international joke.

"Where would Australian soccer be without these clubs? It's the biggest disaster yet for Australian soccer and, indirectly, the national team. I'm glad I'm over here in Belgium."

Johnny Warren, whom Hill tried to sue over a critical article Warren wrote in the 'Sydney Morning Herald', remarked: "Next we'll be getting rid of Italian and Greek restaurants. Why can't we honor our people rather than degrade them?"

Tony Henderson, who played for Marconi for 10 years, pointed out that the logo of Italian club AC Milan featured the British

Cross of St George and that an Irish shamrock took pride of place on the logo of Scottish club Celtic.

"You can't kick the ethnic people in the teeth after they have carried Australian soccer on their backs for 40 or 50 years. This hurts them," Henderson said.

Alan Davidson, another former Australian captain, knighted recently by Malaysia's royalty for his services to Malaysian soccer, said that while he supported efforts to bring soccer into the mainstream of Australian sport Hill had gone too far.

"Over recent years, the clubs have agreed to a lot - name changes, massive outlays for ground improvements and so on - and it would benefit no-one to kick them out," he said. Soccer Australia is supposed to nurture the game, not hurt it."

Socceroo striker Joe Spiteri, who played in the Atlanta Olympics, said: "My dream is to see Australian soccer turn fully professional. Kicking three or four of our best clubs out of the national league is not going to help us do that."

Hill banks on the "non-ethnic" Perth Glory, Carlton, Brisbane Strikers, Wollongong, Canberra Cosmos and whatever others might be lurking in the wings to lift soccer on to a higher plane.

The trouble with many such clubs - at least the artificially-created ones - is that while they might have curiosity value when they are winning, they are prone to sudden collapse because, unlike the ethnic clubs, they have no committed followers in the bad times. Canberra Cosmos, for example, has serious financial problems only a year after being formed. ■



When was the last time you saw Paul Trimboli or Francis Awaritefe being interviewed on a commercial network? How does that compare with the number of times you see Andrew Gaze or Mark Bradtke on your screen? ■



Francis Awaritefe



WHERE IS THE GLAMOUR?

If ever the use of the oft-heard term 'profligate finishing' was called for, it would surely be to describe the marketing of soccer in Australia in recent years. Time and again the gaping open goal of the sporting public's interest has beckoned only for the chance to be skewed wide, or more often than not, hoofed completely over the bar.

With more public infighting than a Liberal/National Party coalition, the powers-that-be within the game have managed to present a facade so fragile and lacking in cohesion that the very idea of anyone being interested in their product seems hopelessly optimistic at best.

The last year has been a good example. While rugby league has fractured and divided over Super League and Australian rules has only tenuously maintained a grip outside its traditional strongholds, the time would surely have been ripe for soccer. What better opportunity than this to move in under cover of confusion, pilfer the larger sponsors and introduce a bold new era of domination while sweeping aside the heir apparent, basketball, in one fell swoop?

Unless you've spent the last 12 months under severe medication (or watching Scottish football) you'll have noticed no such state of affairs currently exists. Soccer continues to languish as an inbred third cousin while a largely disinterested sporting public struggles to understand the 'ethnic issue'.

While no doubt a constraint on the development of the game, the ethnic question can't be held solely responsible for

Marketing the world's most popular sport has always been a difficult task in a rugby and Australian rules obsessed nation. Mark Seymour gives his view on what steps need to be taken to bring soccer to prominence in Australia.

soccer's continuing inability to capture its rightful share of the market. The idea of marketing national league teams as area-based rather than nationality oriented is a strong one and deserves applause, although Soccer Australia's jack-boot approach hasn't helped.

But at a time when the world game is more popular globally than ever, one element in particular seems to be lacking in Australian soccer. In short - glamour. Stars, excitement, a genuine feeling of 'hey, something is happening here'. And the main issue isn't colours on club badges.

Young fans have no trouble identifying with Liverpool in England, Real Madrid in Spain or AC Milan in Italy while maintaining an Australian identity. Count the number of foreign shirts worn by kids who've probably never set foot outside Bankstown or Brunswick and compare them with national league teams. No contest. Why? Again, the perception of the big time is missing.

Which leads conveniently to that other perennial also-ran, basketball. For all the accusations of imported cultural reference points etc (as if we have our own anyway), it has at least broken the traditional stranglehold of rugby and Aussie rules when it comes to young fans.

Of course it manages to ride on the back of worldwide interest in all things black and American, with fashion and music to complete the tie-in, but crack the market it obviously has. Some observers see basketball as taking away a potential soccer fan-base, but others would see an inroad and a way of exploiting the gaps. Leaving aside the razzamatazz and empty hype, we have an example of a small-scale sport with a strong national team getting people interested in their local club and actively supporting the sport.

Marketing has always had a lot to do with perception, and in the national soccer league's 20 year history, most of the time it simply hasn't looked glamorous. But the situation is slowly changing and soccer has to take the chance to push that change further in the right direction.

Basketball is a sport that looks great on television - cheerleaders, the crowd packed around the court; look at all those people, there'd have to be 20 or 30,000 there. Have you seen all the ads on Channel 10, it's huge! But appearances can be deceptive. The average National Basketball League crowd last season was only about 6,000, but it looked like they were packing them in. This is an important distinction.

Meanwhile, the average Ericsson Cup attendance in 1995/96 was 4,500, and with

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The glamour of the world game - Dutch supporters celebrate at Euro '96.

the introduction of likely crowd-pullers Perth and Collingwood this season, and the absence of the financially-poisonous mid-week fixtures in the new 26 game competition, the 1996/97 average will probably be around the 5,500 mark. Almost as high already as the NBL's figures, and that's without commercial television paying the slightest attention to the game.

When, for instance, was the last time you saw Paul Trimboli or Francis Awaritefe being interviewed on a commercial network? How does that compare with the number of times you see Andrew Gaze or Mark Bradtke on your screen? The difference is that commercial television perceives local basketball as having a certain glamour that local soccer doesn't have.

So where are we going to conjure up some of the glamour that basketball apparently has? One of the key aspects is the soccer stadiums in Australia, and commercial TV and the print media have been fed images of 2,000 or so spectators dotted around dilapidated outer-suburban grounds for so long, that it's all they associate with the national soccer league.

But there's cause for optimism here. Soccer under floodlights has always looked great and the summer season of recent years lends itself well to night games. As well, there were numerous matches last season, at South Melbourne, Marconi, UTS Olympic and Brisbane for example, where there could

be no complaints about the quality of the 'entertainment package'. These games deserved more than the handful of seconds exposure, if that, that they received on the commercial TV news services.

Obviously there are still some Ericsson Cup grounds with a major atmosphere deficiency, but an 8 - 10,000 crowd at any of the

**MARKETING:
WHERE IS
THE GLAMOUR?**

aforementioned stadiums makes for a brilliant spectacle. It's the couple of hundred stragglers on huge grass embankments, or cars lined up behind the goals that are the images holding soccer back at club level, and there are a few current national league teams who have major problems in this regard.

It isn't hard to imagine South Melbourne, Olympic or Brisbane performing in front of average crowds of 8,000-odd in a couple of

years time, but other clubs such as Gippsland and Wollongong, for instance, are obviously skating on thin ice.

What's the other main reason Australian sports followers would rather watch lawn bowls on the telly than go to an Ericsson Cup game? It's simple - they don't know any of the players, they don't know their individual stories or their personalities, they don't relate to them.

The drain of our soccer talent to Europe is often mentioned at this point. All our best players are overseas, I hear you say. Certainly that's true, and the reality is that the player drain won't ever be stemmed entirely - no player worth his Gatorade is going to stay at Adelaide City when Atletico Madrid start throwing the pesos around.

But there are highly marketable players here, players who should be infinitely better known to the local sporting public. Think of the skill and the sex appeal of Awaritefe, Trimboli and Kimon Taliadoros.

What about the million dollar man, Zeljko Kalac, or the exciting up-and-comers Vlado Zoric, Nathan Day and Ivan (Ned's brother!) Zelic. The players are here, but the marketing isn't.

Soccer Australia chairman David Hill's experiences at the ABC have made him adept at sleight of hand and blessed him with a bit of snake oil sales charm. He, and the rest of Soccer Australia, need to start using

innovative, creative methods to market our players.

The introduction of pay-TV and the rise of the Internet gives consumers a wider range of viewing options than they've ever had before. In the local sports world the traditional Australian football codes have clogged up free-to-air television and the media in general for years, but soccer has a chance to make inroads in the vastly increased number of 'televsual hours' available on the many new channels, and through the sheer breadth of the Internet.

This extra potential exposure means that the Aussie soccer product, when presented to the viewer channel-surfing vaguely during an evening or surfing the Net during a break from work, has to be captivating. Viewers need to recognise (and therefore be interested in) some of the players, and they need to be watching a game preferably played under lights at a ground that at least looks to be full

of spectators (refer to the camera angles used at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium, for instance, for details on how this can be achieved).

This is soccer's latest and best chance of establishing a real presence in Australia after years of knocking feebly on the door, and the key battle to be won is not Mainstream Australia v The Ethnic. The main barrier to overcome is the average Australian sports fan's perception that local soccer is devoid of personality and glamour. And Soccer

Player drain won't ever be stemmed entirely - no player worth his Gatorade is going to stay at Adelaide City when Atletico Madrid start throwing the pesos around.



Australia doesn't necessarily need to completely alienate its traditional ethnic support base to solve the problem.

Without a severe image overhaul that makes soccer the cutting edge sport for an upcoming generation, we will continue to ask the same question that has remained unanswered for over 20 years. Namely, when will Australian soccer's time come? ■



Empty terraces at a national soccer league clash. Many Australian sports fans would rather watch tennis bowls than go to a game.

FOOTBALL'S FASHION VICTIM



Comedian Vince Sorrenti has kept Australia entertained and informed on a wide variety of subjects during his illustrious career. He's got a few things to get off his chest about soccer as well, as **Patrick Mangan** discovered.

Vince Sorrenti knows his sport and he knows his fashion. And as an Australian social commentator with an Italian background he's well qualified to pin-point the most striking difference between the two countries - the way the supporters dress at the soccer.

Vince has witnessed the local derby between Sampdoria and Genoa on his Italian visits, and it's proved to be an eye-opener for the entertainer. "It's like a war when they play each other," he explains enthusiastically. "The army surrounded the stadium and you had to submit to body searches to get into the ground. I'm talking about hands under your cap and hands in your underpants - I thought my luck had changed.

Inside I would have seen about three seconds of the match. There were smoke bombs, flares, people screaming and rioting, pistols shooting into the air, but the funny thing is that these guys are so wild but everyone there is in a full-length leather jacket and neck tie with the Armani aftershave on. It ended up a draw but they awarded the game on the best-dressed."

Vince feels there are lessons here that Soccer Australia chairman, David Hill, would do well to learn and he's disappointed that Aussie fans aren't following the European lead. "They're letting down not only their club but their ethnicity," he insists. "The last thing I want to see is some hooligan running across the field with a flag and a pair of thongs and shorts on - it's an absolute outrage."

The problem is, as Vince sees it, that they "let any yobbo in." A dress code is the obvious solution. "David Hill should set the example. At every press conference he should wear a three-piece suit and encourage the fans to dress up. Get the girls along too - ballroom gowns, neckties, whatever."

(Given Sorrenti's unconventional ideas, the Soccer Australia supremo is probably relieved that Vince has always been a rugby league fanatic at heart.

"There's not too many rugby playing Italians where I grew up," he admits candidly about his childhood. "I was a bit of an orphan. Punchbowl (his home suburb) is right in the middle of Canterbury-Bankstown, a famous rugby league area, and rugby was the big sport at school (Bankstown Boys High).

"It's a strange question why I didn't play soccer - it's probably because I'm not skilful enough. I'm more the big, barging sort of musclehead. Actually I tried to have a couple of games of soccer for the school. Mate, I was a joke."

Vince has kept an eye on soccer over the years and the changes being introduced by David Hill, and he seems to have mixed feelings about the Hill

revolution. "Even though some of the names have been changed, I think most people within the game still know that that's an Italian club, that's a Greek club and that's a Croatian club, and I don't think you'll ever lose that. But let's face it, a lot of rugby league teams are the same - I mean, St George was an English patriarch.

"I think the majority of soccer fans realise they live in another country now," he laughs. "I hope they do, anyway."

On a broader level, he's known for a long time that sport crosses cultural boundaries. "At school our rugby and soccer teams had a really interesting racial mix - it's funny, everyone hated each other. The Italians hated the Greeks, the Greeks hated the Yugoslavs, the Yugoslavs hated the other everyone hated the Lebanese, and then the Vietnamese came along, and everyone hated them. But on the sporting field everyone was mates and that was the beauty of it."

This isn't to say that Vince sees sport through rose-coloured glasses. He knows there's a darker side. "Comedy parodies life and so does sport. Let's face it, sport is the next best thing to war - it embodies the whole human spirit.

"If we can't have Christians and lions tearing each other apart in an arena, we might as well have Maroon versus Adelaide City. It's the same kind of thing. It's a restrained warfare, it's a slight restraint on the human spirit."

Vince has seen most of Australia thanks to his regular tours (keep an eye out in your local gig guide) and is convinced of sport's importance in our society. "Show me an Aussie who doesn't follow some sort of sport and I'll show you someone who doesn't live in Australia. Our culture's based on leisure. Don't work too hard, you're making it too hot. Just relax and watch the telly on."

Sadly, our leisure culture may lead to Vince's dreams of a formal dress code at Aussie soccer games remaining unfulfilled, because the average fan simply can't be bothered hiring that suit and twisting on the dickie bow once a fortnight before heading off to an Ericsson Cup clash.

However, Vince remains defiantly optimistic that all soccer supporters need is a little re-education, and he points to the old black and white film of footy and cricket games from the 30s and 40s. "If you look at that footage, everyone's in their hat and suit and jacket. At rugby union games they still wear the tweed hats and the tweed coats with the leather patch on the elbow. We need to go back to the future," he concludes firmly. "Or is that forward to the past?" ■

THE PRIDE

*The return of Croatia to international soccer has resulted in the emergence of a national team to be admired. **Anthony Fensom** examines the football scene in the former Yugoslav state.*

Football in Croatia is a national passion, a pleasure enjoyed by both the political elite and the commoner alike. For Australians used to enjoying a carefree lifestyle and a variety of sports, it is difficult to appreciate the importance of the game. Yet to Croatians, the sight of their national team playing in the distinctive red-and-white chequered shirts is a sign that Croatia has arrived on the world stage.

For it has been football, more than anything else, which has helped unite the Croatian community, both at home and in emigre communities the world over. Australia's current champions, the Melbourne Knights, are a product of struggle and personal sacrifice by the Croatian community of Melbourne to build a team and stadium from nothing, to a team which has dominated the national league in the past five years, and provided many valuable players for the Australian national team.

Since independence in 1991, the first opportunity for the Croatians to display the talents which have led to renowned commentators such as Pele describing them as the 'Brazil of Europe' was the 1996 European championships in England. Great expectations were placed on the national team, which had defeated Italy 2-1 in Palermo to secure first place in their group.

Despite the fact that the 22 man squad included only eight home-based players, team spirit was strong, as many of the players had participated in the Yugoslav national team which won the 1987 World Youth Cup. With players of the calibre of Boban (AC Milan), Davor Suker (Real Madrid) and Alen Boksic (Juventus), the Croatians were ranked as dark horses for the tournament. Coach Miroslav Blazevic did little to lower fans' expectations with an open invitation



Established Croatian international, Robert Prosinecki.

for President Tudjman to accompany him to Wembley for the final – a final in which the coach implied his team would be participating!

Unfortunately for Blazevic, he was unable to make good his invitation to the President. Victories over Turkey (1-0) and Denmark (3-0) encouraged the coach to rest his star players for the final group game against Portugal. Seven players were changed for the match in which Portugal gained a deserved 3-0 victory.

This result left Croatia in second place in Group D, giving the team a quarter-final against Germany, Portugal entertaining the Czech Republic as the first-placed qualifiers. The match against Germany was an encounter which the

Croatians probably would have preferred in the later stages of the tournament. Germany won the day 2-1, a victory masterminded by star sweeper Matthias Sammer, and greatly assisted by the dismissal of midfielder Igor Stimac just as the Croatians were beginning to gain the ascendancy.

Despite this defeat, the tournament had served to provide both the Croatian footballers and the new nation with a great deal of international respect and credibility. Shortly after the tournament, several of the more promising players gained transfers to new clubs in England, Spain and Italy. Blazevic's offer of resignation was refused by President Tudjman, and he will be leading the campaign for qualification for the 1998

OF CROATIA

World Cup in France.

The Croatians have been placed in Group 1, a group including neighbours Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia, with only Greece and Denmark rating a real threat for the top position. The campaign began in October with the 'away' match against Bosnia played in Bologna, Italy, after FIFA decided that the Bosnian national stadium in Sarajevo was not yet of a suitable standard. Playing in poor conditions in front of a largely empty stadium, the Croatians outclassed their less illustrious neighbours, winning 4-1 with two goals by star striker Boksic, Bilic and Vlaovic contributing one apiece.

France '98 will represent the real test of Croatian football as the nucleus of the 1987 World Youth Cup winners have one last shot at international success. The future performers will come from the emerging national league.

Since its inception, more than 1,300 players have left to seek greener pastures abroad, a player drain of some proportion considering Croatia's population of four million! It certainly puts Australia's player exodus problem into perspective. Despite the loss of such players, the league is still of a reasonable standard, as evidenced by Hajduk Split's successful Champions League campaign in 1994/95, reaching the quarter-finals before encountering a goal-hungry Ajax Amsterdam.

Currently consisting of some 16 teams in the first division, the league is dominated by the top two clubs, Croatia Zagreb (formerly Dinamo) and Hajduk Split. In the five seasons since independence, Hajduk (which translates as 'Bandits') has won three championships, Croatia winning the other two, including the 1995/96 finals series. Croatia Zagreb remains the only Croatian team to win a European trophy, Dinamo capturing the UEFA Cup (then known as the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup) in 1966. Both clubs feature Australians, with Mark Viduka a leading goalscorer at Croatia, Josip Skoko and Steve Horvat first-team regulars at Hajduk.

Despite winning both the championship and the Croatian cup in 1995/96, Croatia Zagreb was placed in the UEFA Cup in 1996/97 together with runners-up Hajduk, UEFA judging the Croatians to be not yet worthy of Champions League status, despite Hajduk's participation in 1994/95. Unfortunately both clubs were eliminated from the UEFA Cup in 1996/97 by Russian opponents,

Croatia losing to Spartak Moscow on the away goals rule (3-3 aggregate), Hajduk going down to Torpedo Moscow 2-1 on aggregate. In the Cup Winners' Cup Varteks of Varazdin again lost to the Russian hoodoo – Lokomotiv Moscow progressing on the away goals rule, after winning the home tie 1-0 and losing the away match 2-1.

European distractions finished, the big two clubs have set about chasing each other for the championship. After seven rounds, Croatia led the

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table with maximum points, scoring 26 goals and conceding only four, with Hajduk second, losing only once to Croatia. Due to the economic conditions in Croatia, crowd attendances are generally low, around the 8,000 mark for both the top two clubs, except for the so called 'derby' games between the two.

The round six derby attracted 30,000 fans to Maksimir Stadium in Zagreb as Croatia ran out 2-1 winners, the match featuring Viduka and Skoko on opposing sides. Horvat has yet to take part in a match for Hajduk this season because of injury problems. Both Skoko and Horvat have recently become citizens of Croatia due to the player restrictions imposed by the HNS (national federation) of only four foreigners per club. With six foreigners on Hajduk's books, the Australians have made the decision to improve their prospects of playing in the first team – yet both are apparently ineligible to play for Croatia due to their past performances for Australian national teams.

With five goals in seven matches, Mark Viduka is the third top goalscorer in the league, with Skoko not far behind, managing four. Despite the popularity of the finals series in the 1995/96 season, the clubs voted to increase the first division to 16 teams for 1996/97, with the championship being decided by the traditional points system. The increase from ten teams has undoubtedly lowered the overall standard, a standard which has dropped from before independence when the



Socceroo Steve Horvat making a name for himself at Hajduk Split

national league encompassed approximately 20 million people instead of Croatia's five million.

Politics intruded into Croatian football, with President Tudjman personally intervening to change the name of the most popular team, Dinamo, to Croatia. Tudjman regarded the name as being associated with communism, similar to the Dinamo teams in other eastern European countries, despite Dinamo's nationalistic past.

All Dinamo insignia is banned from Maksimir Stadium, to the chagrin of the supporters, who taunt the President with chants of 'Dinamo' when within earshot. As further evidence of the Tudjman's hands-on approach to the Zagreb side, when he visited Australia in 1995, the President personally telephoned Mark Viduka to invite him to play for 'his' club!

Politics and football are a dangerous mix, yet cannot be disregarded when assessing the game in Croatia. For Viduka, Horvat and Skoko, continuing success will entail the possibility of a transfer to the richer leagues of Europe. Australian supporters can only hope that players of the calibre of Viduka utilise their overseas experience for the benefit of the national team, not for a country already rich in talent.

Note: This article was compiled with the assistance of Tomislav Djerek's Croatian Sports Server, accessible at <http://pubwww.srce.hr/sport/>

In a Europe seemingly overwhelmed with football competitions, the UEFA Champions League has, until now, represented the cream of European football.

Yet it is no more. UEFA's decision, as of October 1996, to expand the competition to 24 teams in 1997/98 and to allow eight chosen countries to enter the runner-up in their respective domestic competitions, has instantly devalued the League as a meaningful league of champions.

The change, inspired by UEFA President Lennart Johansson, is an abject surrender to the wealthier clubs of Europe, including the likes of Barcelona, AC Milan, Juventus, Arsenal and Anderlecht, who in 1995 threatened to establish their own elite competition in opposition to UEFA's three cup format. Such a competition would pay no respect to the clubs' current performances, but rather

resources to progress further.

It is not difficult to guess which eight countries will enjoy the luxury of entering their second-placed club in the Champions' League. Germany, England, Italy, Holland, Belgium, France, Spain and Portugal are likely to be the chosen few, fortunate to have the population to support the 'pay-for-view' pay television revolution which is currently pouring millions of dollars into those elite leagues. The champions of other smaller and less wealthy countries in eastern Europe will undoubtedly be given various barriers to entry

discourage a break-away by those clubs unable to gain entry by virtue of winning their domestic championships. British clubs, in particular, have found European competition difficult to surmount in the 1990s. Lennart Johansson has found the

Ajax v AC Milan in the 1995 Champions' League final. Under UEFA's new ruling, the big clubs will keep getting bigger.



ONCE WE WERE CHAMPIONS

would be based on whether they had enough money to participate.

Together with the Bosman decision, which is already assisting the wealthier clubs to gain a monopoly over the best players, such a league would entrench the power of the elite few and increase further the growing gap between the rich and poor of football. Despite the increasing complexity of UEFA's various competitions, the smaller clubs (at least in theory) have the opportunity to participate in the best leagues in the world, and thereby gain access to the financial

— or alternatively, dumped in the UEFA Cup as a consolation prize.

UEFA is thus devaluing the present UEFA Cup, a competition which comprises the runners-up of such domestic competitions already, and is often a more intriguing battle for the spectator. Last season's champions, after all, rarely capture their previous form in the Champions League.

In expanding the size of the Champions League (formerly a knock-out competition but presently in a league format of four groups of four teams), UEFA hopes to

solution for those with the money, but not necessarily the talent.

Supporters of an elite competition undoubtedly will be delighted with the expansion of the league. For those who believe in the principle of equality of opportunity, Johansson has given little indication that he would be a better leader of world football than the FIFA incumbent, Joao Havelange. UEFA's new golden age appears to be golden only for the select few.

— ANTHONY FENSOM

Round 1**Friday, 11 October**

Newcastle Breakers 6 (Bennett 62, 67, 69, 73, Thomas 78, Sprod 80)

West Adelaide 1 (Perin 60)

Venue: Breakers Stadium

Attendance: 4813

Referee: Brett Hugo

Saturday, 12 October

Canberra Cosmos 2 (Kelly 11, Perinovic 85)

Marconi Fairfield 3 (Zoric 23, Foster 31, Babic 49)

Venue: Bruce Stadium

Attendance: 3500

Referee: Greg Leverton

Saturday, 12 October

Gippsland Falcons 0

South Melbourne 0

Venue: Falcons Park

Attendance: 3235

Referee: Eugene Brazzale

Sunday, 13 October

Sydney United 3 (Zdrilic 9, Babic 37, Milicic 81)

Wollongong City 3 (Horsley 7, 52, Josevski 14)

Venue: Sydney Utd Sports Centre

Attendance: 4085

Referee: Matthew Breeze

Sunday, 13 October

Collingwood Warriors 3 (Boutsianis 8, Taliadoros 68, 72)

Melbourne Knights 0

Venue: Victoria Park

Attendance: 12561

Referee: Gerry Connolly

Sunday, 13 October

Perth Glory 1 (MacKenzie 89)

UTS Olympic 4 (Ardone 22, 65, Tome 63, og 68)

Venue: Perth Oval

Attendance: 9639

Referee: Eddie Lennie

Sunday, 13 October

Adelaide City 0

Brisbane Strikers 0

Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium

Attendance: 3719

Referee: Wayne Dade

Round 2**Saturday, 19 October**

Brisbane Strikers 6 (Brown 10, 61, 80, og 39, Philips 65, Farina 90 pen)

Newcastle Breakers 1 (Sprod 25pen)

Venue: Suncorp Stadium

Attendance: 4572

Referee: Mark Shield

Saturday, 19 October

Marconi Fairfield 1 (Bingley 89)

Collingwood Warriors 1 (MacNicol 55)

Venue: Marconi Stadium

Attendance: 6237

Referee: Derek Crawford

Sunday, 20 October

South Melbourne 1 (Orlic 47)

Sydney United 3 (Marusic 24, Zdrilic 37, 40)

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium

Attendance: 8668

Referee: Barry Panella

Sunday, 20 October

Melbourne Knights 1 (Marth 43)

Gippsland Falcons 0

Venue: Knights Park

Attendance: 3760

Referee: Simon Micallef

Sunday, 20 October

Wollongong City 1 (Horsley 87)

Adelaide City 0

Venue: Brandon Park

Attendance: 5348

Referee: Brett Hugo

Sunday, 20 October

UTS Olympic 1 (Tome 9)

Canberra Cosmos 0

Venue: Belmore Sports Ground

Attendance: 7428

Referee: Con Diomis

Sunday, 20 October

West Adelaide 3 (og 40, Tsekis 48, 72)

Perth Glory 1 (Strudwick 89)

Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium

Attendance: 3537

Referee: Eugene Brazzale

Round 3**Friday, 25 October**

Canberra Cosmos 1 (Kelly 45)

West Adelaide 3 (Thorp 1, 57, Borghetto 88)

Venue: Bruce Stadium

Attendance: 3200

Referee: Matthew Breeze

Saturday, 26 October

Brisbane Strikers 2 (Farina 44, Wehrman 47)

Wollongong City 1 (Horsley 75)

Venue: Suncorp Stadium

Attendance: 3484

Referee: Derek Crawford

Saturday, 26 October

Gippsland Falcons 2 (Duric 11, 16)

Marconi Fairfield 2 (Holst 40, Maloney 67)

Venue: Falcons Park

Attendance: 2500

Referee: Gerry Connolly

Saturday, 26 October

Newcastle Breakers 1 (Wilson 28)

Perth Glory 3 (Strudwick 33, Despotovski 35, 85)

Venue: Breakers Stadium

Attendance: 4300

Referee: Simon Micallef

Round 19**Friday, 1 November**

Canberra Cosmos 1 (Dee 89)

Newcastle Breakers 1 (Zane 74)

Venue: Bruce Stadium

Attendance: 9421

Referee: Matthew Breeze

Eriasson Cup ladder as at 3 November 1996

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brisbane Strikers	4	3	1	0	10	3	9
UTS Olympic	3	3	0	0	8	1	9
Sydney United	3	2	1	0	9	4	7
Collingwood Warriors	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Perth Glory	4	2	0	2	11	8	6
West Adelaide	4	2	0	2	8	10	6
Wollongong City	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
Newcastle Breakers	5	1	2	2	9	11	4
Marconi Fairfield	4	1	2	1	6	8	5
Melbourne Knights	3	1	1	1	1	3	4
Adelaide City	3	0	2	1	0	1	2
Gippsland Falcons	4	0	2	2	2	6	2
South Melbourne	3	0	1	2	2	5	1
Canberra Cosmos	5	0	1	4	4	14	1

Leading scorers

Jason Bennett	Newcastle Breakers	4
Bobby Despotovski	Perth Glory	4
Matthew Horsley	Wollongong City	4
Norman Tome	UTS Olympic	4
David Zdrilic	Sydney United	4
Rod Brown	Brisbane Strikers	3
Kris Trajanovski	UTS Olympic	3
Alex Duric	Gippsland Falcons	3
Frank Farina	Brisbane Strikers	3
Norman Kelly	Canberra Cosmos	3
Glenn Sprod	Newcastle Breakers	3
Paul Strudwick	Perth Glory	3
Kimion Taliadoros	Collingwood Warriors	3
Hamilton Thorp	West Adelaide	3
Jim Tsekis	West Adelaide	3

Round 4**Saturday, 2 November**

Marconi Fairfield 0

Sydney United 3 (Zdrilic 49, Moric 51, Cvetko 84)

Venue: Marconi Stadium

Attendance: 8952

Referee: Eddie Lennie

Sunday, 3 November

Wollongong City 0

Newcastle Breakers 0

Venue: Brandon Park

Attendance: 3484

Referee: Jim Markovski

Sunday, 3 November

Perth Glory 6 (McVittie 19, Despotovski 31, 87,

Wingell 32, G.Naven 67, Miller 80)

Canberra Cosmos 0

Venue: Perth Oval

Attendance: 8053

Referee: Barry Panella

Sunday, 3 November

South Melbourne 1 (Orlic 24)

Brisbane Strikers 2 (Hunter 4 pen, Wehrman 66)

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium

Attendance: 5452

Referee: Brett Hugo

Sunday, 3 November

Melbourne Knights 0

Adelaide City 0

Venue: Knights Park

Attendance: 3455

Referee: Eugene Brazzale

Sunday, 3 November

UTS Olympic 3 (Trajanovski 47, Tome 55, 57)

Gippsland Falcons 0

Venue: Belmore Sports Ground

Attendance: 7128

Referee: Matthew Breeze

Sunday, 3 November

West Adelaide 1 (Slager 21)

Collingwood Warriors 2 (Cerracchio 24, 68)

Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium

Attendance: 5611

Referee: Gerry Connolly

After a long period of uncertainty, Eddie Thomson has accepted a huge offer to coach in Japan. Ray Gatt looks at the background to the move, Thomson's reign as Socceroo coach and the likely contenders for the job.

EDDIE FINALLY EXITS

Now that the sun has set on one of the most controversial reigns in Australian soccer, the time is ripe to look back on the success or otherwise of departing Socceroos coach, Eddie Thomson.

The man who guided the destiny of the national team for the last six years has accepted a lucrative deal – believed to be in excess of \$500,000 a season – to coach Hiroshima in next season's Japanese J-League.

He will become the highest paid coach in Australian sporting history and, provided he can steer Hiroshima to some form of success in his first year, the financial rewards will be

absolutely stunning.

On top of the side benefits, which include a brand new Mazda, airline tickets and free accommodation for him and his wife, Pauline, he stands to make more money than any coach in any sport in Australia could hope to earn in three years.

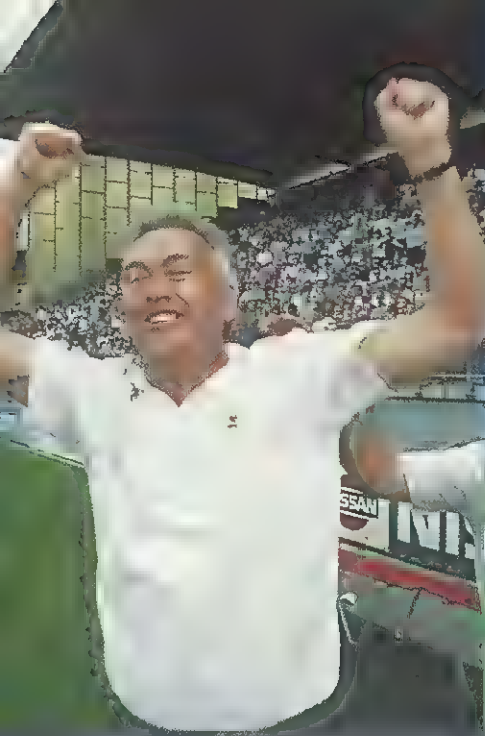
The drums had been beating for many moons that Thomson would walk out on Australian soccer. After lengthy negotiations, he finally informed Soccer Australia last month that he was quitting.

And who could blame him for taking the money and running? If the truth be known, while the money offered by Hiroshima was a consideration, other factors have taken a heavy toll on him.

When he was adversely named in the Stewart Report into the transfer of players to overseas clubs it started the ball rolling for Thomson. While Stewart recommended his sacking for his role in the Ned Zelic transfer to Borussia Dortmund, a Senate Inquiry found no evidence of impropriety on his behalf and Thomson was cleared.

But the episode left Thomson with a terrible scar. The backbiters, critics and snipers finally got too much for him. They put him on his guard and, save for his family and some close friends, he wasn't prepared to trust anyone any longer.

Depending on who you spoke to or what you read or heard in the media, there was no middle ground regarding Thomson – you



EDDIE FINALLY EXITS

either liked him or loathed him.

He was either a terrific coach with a brilliant tactical mind who did great service for the game and took the Socceroos to a new level, or like Frank Arok said, his departure "is a blessing for the sport because the game never went forward under him".

"Frank should talk. He is way past his use-by date. I carried the man for the four years I was with him," Thomson countered.

To be honest, Thomson may be better off out of here and in an environment which is likely to appreciate his ability, honesty and sincerity.

Thomson's exit also included a verbal brawl with Soccer Australia commissioner George Negus.

Thomson told the Sydney Daily Telegraph's John Taylor: "Negus has been in the game five minutes as far as international football is concerned, and all of a sudden he's telling board members that I'm playing the wrong tactics.

"He says I should get the sack but his negative approach helps nobody. I've been in the game since I was 18. I still haven't learned everything about it. I don't profess

to be an expert like him.

"Yet, here he is telling people I used the wrong tactics against Spain at the Atlanta Olympics. He should stick to marketing."

One of the biggest gripes about Thomson is that he was a negative coach with the Socceroos and that his results were nothing to write home about. To some people, Thomson was a failure. I think a faulty measure was used here.

If my memory serves me right, weren't the Socceroos just one match away from qualifying for the 1994 World Cup finals? Wasn't it the world power Argentina who stopped us from glory? And what about the Barcelona Olympics - didn't the Olyroos finish fourth? Our best-ever result.

And what about all the great players that he brought through the ranks, many of whom are now playing overseas - Ned Zelic, Paul Okon, Mark Viduka, Craig Moore and Harry Kewell, to name but a few.

In my opinion, Thomson's loss is a sad blow for the game here. SA should have done everything in its power to keep him here, even on a part-time basis. But the SA board wouldn't wear that, so Thommo is on his way overseas. Hill said there is plenty of time to find a replacement because the World Cup finals are two years away.

As the robot in 'Lost In Space' used to say: "Danger, danger, warning, warning."

It sounds to me like Hill already believes we have qualified for the Cup. But what about the Oceania qualifiers? More importantly, what about New Zealand?

There's a long line of Socceroo coaches - ask Arok - who can attest to the fact that the Kiwis have wrecked our Cup hopes more than once.

And, if we get over the Kiwis, does SA think playing the fourth-placed team in Asia will be a cakewalk? I hope not.

Former national league coach Mike Urukalo warns that Asia has got its act together and the Socceroos could be in for a rude shock.

"Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Korea, Japan, Iran, Iraq...the list goes on," Urukalo said. "They could all test Australia.

"And that goes for youth level as well. I know that Indonesia recently sent a squad of 24 under-18 players, four coaches and two physios to Italy for 12 months. That's frightening."

So, what about a successor to Thomson?

A host of overseas and local coaches have already been linked with the job, including former Scottish and Liverpool great Kenny Dalglish, Coventry manager Ron Atkinson and the great Dutchman Johan Cruyff.

On the local front, just two names have emerged. Not surprisingly, Collingwood Warriors' Zoran Matic and assistant national

coach and Olympic coach Raul Blanco are the front-runners.

Matic seems to have most support and, obviously, he would do a fine job. He is a strong-willed, no-nonsense type of person who does not suffer fools.

Zoran, however, won't chase the job. SA will have to go to him. I suspect, though, that Hill doesn't quite know how to take Matic, who can be very difficult to get to know.

Certainly, if Zoran, who has had fantastic success at national league level with Adelaide City, gets the job he won't be afraid to tell Hill or the SA board where to go if he believes they are not doing the right thing by the team.

Whether the SA boss - or George Negus, for that matter - could handle Zoran's abrupt but forthright manner, is something else.

Anyone, however, who believes Zoran's appointment will be the catalyst for a new found open, adventurous and attractive style Socceroos, would have another thing coming.

While Matic's thinking and tactics regarding the game are top notch, the fact is he is from the old school.

If anything, he showed with Adelaide City that he has a more cautious approach to the game than Thomson. But that style has served him well and won him three championships. A win is a win as far as he is concerned. I don't care if the Socceroos win 1-0 or 10-0... as long as they win and get to the 1998 World Cup in France then that's fine by me.

Raul, one of the nice guys of the game, has served his apprenticeship and he is certainly a good option working in tandem with Les Scheinflug. The two are great friends and have worked under Thomson for six years so they know the ropes. This is the partnership Thomson believes should replace him but I doubt anyone will listen to him.

Forget it Thommo. Go to Japan and enjoy the professionalism, the set-up and the character of the J-League.

And enjoy the money...heaven knows you deserve it. ■

THE THOMSON YEARS

1977: Arrives in Australia to play at centre-back for Sydney City, having previously served Heart of Midlothian and Aberdeen in Scotland and San Antonio in the United States.

1980, '81, '82: Won national league championships as coach of Sydney City.

1981, '84, '85: Australian coach of the year.

1987-89: Coached UTS Olympic.

1990-96: National coach in 84 senior matches for 39 wins, 16 draws, 29 losses 99 goals scored and 70 goals conceded.



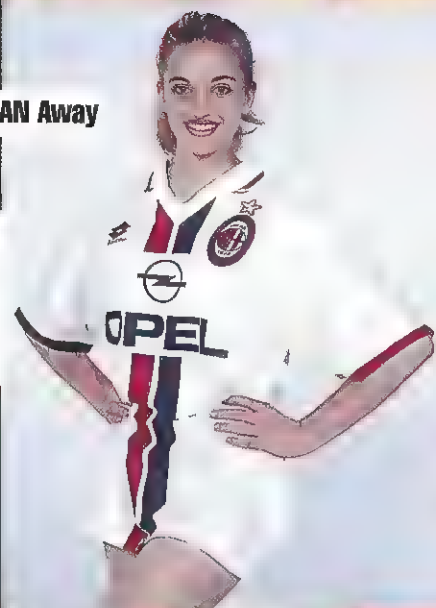
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Tuta MILAN Allenatore
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Maglia Gara MILAN 4th 6

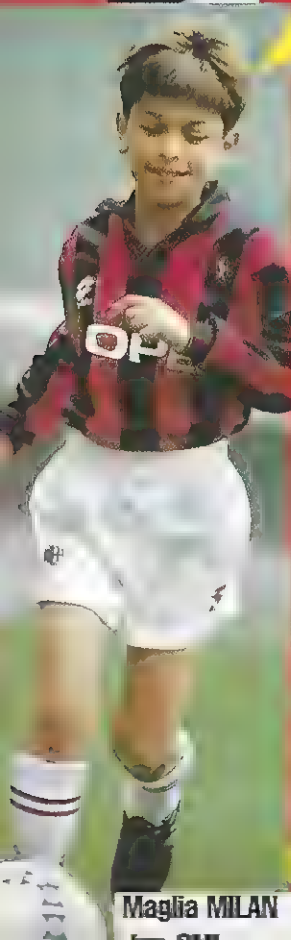


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Sportspower

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He's not the flashiest player in the world, and football fans are still wondering if he'll ever say anything remotely interesting in an interview, but for Alan Shearer the task has always been scoring goals rather than dazzling the public with his sparkling personality.

And no-one's going to argue with the methods of the player considered by most to be one of the greatest strikers England has yet produced. For such a well-credentialed player, though, Shearer's career was strangely slow to take off. After scoring a hat-trick on his league debut for Southampton against Arsenal in 1988, the 26-year-old's career moved in slow motion until a run of good form in 1991 saw him picked to play for England.

He scored on debut for his country against France and seemed earmarked for a big future. But Shearer, like many of his international team-mates, endured a difficult time during England's disastrous 1992 European Championship campaign in Sweden.

In the wake of England's early exit from the tournament Blackburn Rovers chairman Jack Walker splashed out \$7 million on the striker who'd scored just 23 league goals in four years, and some pundits concluded the steel magnate had rocks in his head. Come 1996, though, Rovers' purchase of Shearer is generally regarded as one of the bargains of the decade.

As well as being the driving force behind Blackburn's first championship victory in nearly 70 years, Shearer amazingly scored at least 30 league goals in each of his last three seasons with the club. Understandably, fans of the Lancashire side were distraught when

the England forward turned his back on Rovers earlier this year to sign for his boyhood idols, Newcastle.

It took a world record \$30 million to prise Shearer away from Blackburn, but the Magpies manager Kevin Keegan needed only to point to his new striker's form during Euro 96 as evidence that, even at that price, Shearer may prove to be excellent value for money.

Shearer entered the European Championships having not scored for England for nearly two years, but in spite of the emergence of Liverpool's Robbie Fowler, England coach Terry Venables stayed loyal to the striker who'd been at the apex of his controversial 'Christmas tree' formation since Venables' elevation to the No.1 position.

Within 45 minutes the coach had been vindicated. Less than half an hour into England's opening game against Switzerland, Shearer slipped away from the Swiss defence to give his country the lead. A brilliant run of five goals in five games, including strikes against international heavyweights Holland and Germany, saw Shearer race away with the Euro 96 top scorer award.

The bidding war for Shearer's services began almost as soon as the unfortunate Gareth Southgate belted England's sixth penalty straight at the German keeper, Kopke in the semi-final. Reigning champions Manchester United were the early favourites for the Blackburn forward's signature, but Newcastle always held the 'home town' trump card.

The Euro 96 top scorer arrived at St James' Park in August with a fanfare generally reserved for royalty or Beatles 'Anthology' albums. He announced that he was 'only a sheet metal worker's son', diplomatically failing to add 'now earning \$60,000 a week'. Not that many Newcastle supporters would begrudge him the cash if he could only help deliver the Premier League title to the north-east club.

Again, there were those who were sceptical about the transfer. After all, the Magpies had thrown away the 1995/96 title with a series of defensive lapses in the latter part of the season, and signing Shearer wouldn't help eliminate that problem.

Keegan, creditably (although perhaps naively - we'll all have retrospective wisdom at the end of the season), has taken an unusual approach, believing that if his team scores enough goals the occasional blunder at the back won't cost his side too dearly.

The early signs are that Keegan may have got it right. In spite of an ominous 4-0 defeat in the pre-season Charity Shield game against their Manchester arch-rivals,

BLICK GOES SHEARER



Alan Shearer **FACT FILE**

	League Games	League Goals	International Games	International Goals
Southampton	118	23	30	13
Blackburn	138	112		
Newcastle	10	7		



Alan Shearer - can he help break the drought for Newcastle?

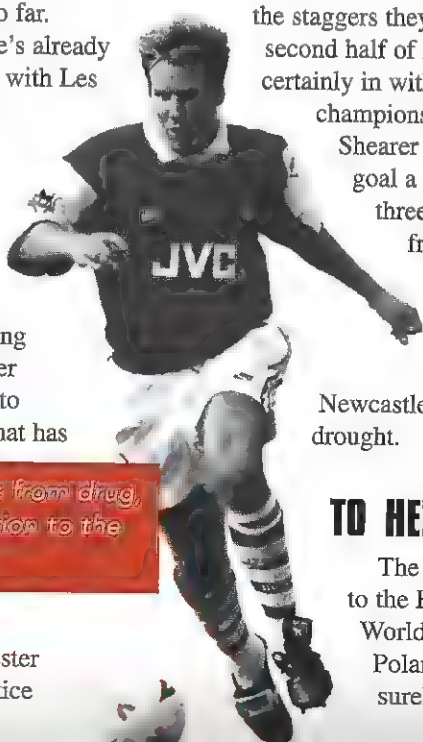
Newcastle has been scoring freely, winning matches and taking their place at the top end of the Premiership table.

Shearer has played no small role in the club's championship challenge so far. Although currently out injured he's already forged an impressive partnership with Les Ferdinand and both strikers have been leading the charge towards the Premier League individual scorer's Golden Shoe award.

Newcastle fans will long remember the tears of last season's league disappointment, but with Alan Shearer spearheading their attack, the Magpies are better equipped than they've ever been to clinch the championship crown that has

to Newcastle's fellow Premiership contenders that when they're on form, they're close to unstoppable.

If they can avoid the strange case of the staggers they developed in the second half of last season, they're certainly in with a strong championship chance. And if Shearer can keep up his almost goal a game record of the last three years and stay free from injury for the rest of the campaign, there won't be too many punters betting against Newcastle breaking their drought.



Paul Merson has come back from drug, gambling and alcohol addiction to the verge of the England team.

eluded them since 1927. Their 5-0 crushing of Manchester United in mid-October served notice

TO HELL AND BACK

The return of Paul Merson to the England squad for the World Cup match against Poland in October is surely the 'feel good'

story of the local season so far. When the Arsenal midfielder confessed in late 1994 that he was a cocaine addict, gambling addict and alcoholic, the football career of the 28-year-old looked to be in jeopardy.

But the gap-toothed Merson, whose trademark goal celebration used to be pretending to down a pint of beer, has capped off a remarkable two year comeback by gaining the official endorsement of England coach Glenn Hoddle.

The unusually compassionate attitude of the English FA has paved the way for Merson's extraordinary tale. When he confessed to his addictions, the FA's response was to send the 14-times capped player on a six week rehabilitation program. An FA official told Merson, 'The day you pull on an England shirt again, you will have thanked us for everything and more'.

But Merson had sunk a long way. He recalled recently: 'I used to get drunk when we won, get drunk when we lost and get drunk when we drew. I was always out of it.' In his autobiography 'Rock Bottom', which graphically details his decline, he admits he once told his wife, 'If I have to give up gambling or you, I'd stick with the gambling'. The wayward player later gratefully acknowledged his wife Lorraine's invaluable support in helping him tackle his problems.

Remarkably, throughout a decade of drinking and gambling, Merson won two league championship medals, two League Cup medals and an FA Cup winners medal, as well as being part of the Arsenal team that won the 1994 European Cup Winners Cup.

Ex-Gunners' manager George Graham once described Merson as the most naturally gifted player he'd ever worked with, and fans can only speculate at what Merson may have achieved had he not been burdened with his addictions.

British football over the last 25 years is littered with examples of extravagantly talented players who, for various reasons, haven't reached their potential - Alan Hudson, Stan Bowles, Frank Worthington, even Paul Gascoigne and the legendary George Best are tarred with that particular brush - but Merson has the opportunity now not to join the list. Fate, his own determination and a benevolent English FA have combined to give him a second chance. ■

SAY CHEESE

The recent England v Poland under-21 international match was delayed for two hours when a suspicious package was discovered and eventually detonated. It turned out to be a cheese sandwich.



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SACCHI OUT, ZOFF IN?

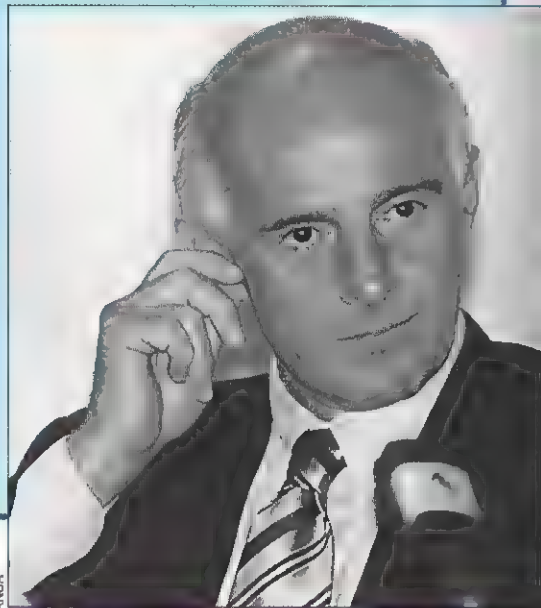
The latest rumours emanating from Italy concerning the national coaching position have created a lot of interest, with former World Cup winner Dino Zoff being put forward as the eventual replacement for the embattled Arrigo Sacchi. A recent survey conducted by an Italian media organisation revealed that a massive 54% of those interviewed believed Sacchi should go, with 23% against the dismissal and another 23% undecided. Of those who said Sacchi's time was up, 17% wanted Zoff, 24% nominated under-21 coach Cesare Maldini (father of Paolo), 13% Giovanni Trapattoni, 14% Fabio Capello and 15% Marcello Lippi, while 17% were undecided.

Despite Maldini being more popular in this survey, recent media reports have claimed that Dino Zoff has become a frontrunner for the spot, with Sacchi expected to be sacked in the coming months. With a sweeping change happening at the head of the Italian Soccer Federation, it seems as if Sacchi's time is up.

However, should Sacchi lose the national coaching position soon, don't be surprised to see him return to AC Milan. Current coach Oscar Tabarez is treading a fine line, with Milan's performances this season

proving to be less than satisfactory for a club which demands perfection. Sacchi of course coached the great AC Milan sides of the late 1980s which built the tradition of the superclub, and despite his problems and less-than-flattering results with the Azzurri, he would be seen as the ideal choice as Tabarez's replacement. Italy's next World Cup qualifier is in February next year when it takes on England at Wembley Stadium.

Italian national coach Arrigo Sacchi - is he on the way out?



TIATTO & SALERNITANA

Danny Tiatto has settled in well in Italy after last month signing with Serie B club, Salernitana. Tiatto was originally heading for a transfer to Switzerland but when the opportunity to move to Italy arose he gladly accepted it. Danny made his debut against Genoa, coming on as a substitute, and since then he has slowly settled into the routine and rigours of playing the Italian style of game. Salernitana has in the past two seasons narrowly missed out on promotion to the Serie A, so with a little bit of luck Danny may be a part of his club's third time lucky attempt at making it to the big time.



Socceroo Danny Tiatto is beginning to make his mark with Serie B side, Salernitana.

The first was with the Italian under-21 side against Moldova, followed by another in a Serie B match against Palermo, while the final three goal bag was scored once again for the under-21 side, this time against Georgia. He is no doubt a striking sensation of the future, destined to land at one of the superclubs of the Serie A.

But despite this sudden exposure, Cristiano has consistently proven in recent seasons that he is destined for greatness, having scored sixty goals in two campaigns with the Perugia youth team.

ITALIANS ABROAD

With the publicity surrounding the likes of Vialli and Ravanelli who are now starring in the English Premier League, let's take the opportunity to have a look at all the Italians playing outside their homeland.

Austria - Giuseppe Giannini & Enzo Gambaro (Sturm Graz)

France - Ivano Franceschini & Alberto Malusci (Marseille), Roberto Onorati (Nizza)

Germany - Ruggiero Rizzitelli (Bayern Munich), Marco Rossi (Eintracht)

Japan - Daniele Massaro (Shimizu), Salvatore Schillaci (Jubilo Iwata)

England - Roberto Di Matteo & Gianluca Vialli (Chelsea), Fabrizio Ravanelli (Middlesbrough), Andrea Silenzi (Nottingham Forest), Ivano Bonetti (Tranmere), Benito Carbone (Sheffield Wed)

Malta - Orazio Sorbello (Hamrun Spartans)

Scotland - Pasquale Bruno (Hearts), Paolo Di Canio (Celtic)

Spain - Damiano Longhi (Hercules)

Switzerland - Luigi Gualco (Lucerne), Stefano Nava (Servette), Luca Fusi (Lugano)

United States - Roberto Donadoni & Nicola Caricola (Metrostar New York), Giuseppe Galderisi (Tampa Bay Mutiny)

LUCARELLI

One of the hottest properties in Italian soccer at the moment is a young man by the name of Cristiano Lucarelli. At 21 he has the world at his feet especially if recent goalscoring performances are any gauge. Cristiano, who plays for Padova in the Serie B, shot to prominence recently with a hat-trick of hat-tricks in the space of a week.

SUGHER

*Ruud
Gullit*



 **lotto**

Italian Sports Design

WHAT'S HOT

Compiled by Kevin Christopher and Harry Georgiadis

Intercontinental Cup - finally we've got what we always wished for. Now what's that saying about getting something you've always wished for?

Collingwood Warriors - we have seen the future of Australian soccer and it's Collingwood. Big crowds, strong team, impressive stadium and fanatical support. We can't wait for the first Carlton-Collingwood derby.

Perth Glory - Glory, Glory, Hallelujah. Soccer's administrators have finally accepted the undisputed geographical fact that Perth IS a part of Australia and should have a representative in the A-League.

Eddie Krncevic - Eddie has taken Frank Farina's lead and come home. We can only hope more of our Euroroos do likewise.

Stan Lazaridis - They said that Stan would never make it in the hurly-burly of the Premier League, particularly after breaking a leg. However Stan has shown great tenacity to regain full fitness and a regular spot in the Hammers line-up.

Zoran Matic - it has taken the ex-Adelaide City boss only a short time to mould a group of talented individuals into a Johnnie Walker Cup winning side, and more! Matic the 1996/97 coach of the year - I'd like to see that.

Kevin Muscat & Carl Veart - the Aussie duo have become an integral part of Crystal Palace's push for promotion into the Premier League. And with Jim Tsekini also spending some time there, Selhurst Park is quickly replacing Earl's Court as London's Aussie drop-in centre.

Troy Halpin - the stylish and skilful Newcastle Breaker will, sooner rather than later, become a Socceroo.

Alex Castro - another future Roo. Pity he had to leave Canberra, though...

AND WHAT'S NOT

Dissent towards referees - yep, the players and the refs still don't know the rules. According to Law XII, "a player shall be sent off the field of play and shown the red card if, in the opinion of the referee, he...uses foul or abusive language". Couldn't be simpler really, so what's the problem?

Flores - whether they be of the pyrotechnic or trousered variety, they have no place in Australian soccer.

Johnnie Walker Cup - poor attendances, average games, little media interest. We need a good stiff drink.

Logos - was anything really achieved in the end, or did it demonstrate once again how low Aussie soccer can go?

UEFA Champions League - Senor Dollar has spoken and UEFA is all ears. Berlusconi's European league is now a step closer, but will the competition now be renamed the 'Champions plus teams with the fattest wallets and most pay-TV subscribers league'?

Oceania - just ask David Hill.

John Markovski - he's back, bigger than ever?

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Snapshots

Welcome to **SNAPSHOTS**, Australia's only photography exhibition where you are the artist. Soccer Australia invites all our readers to send in your favourite photos for inclusion in the magazine.

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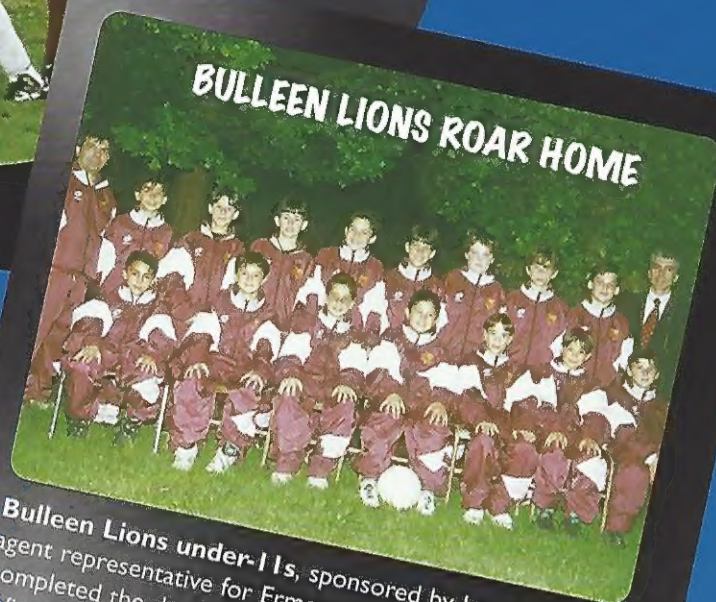
Send your photos in to:

SNAPSHOTS, Soccer Australia, P.O.Box 200, Carlton South, Victoria 3053



MY BALL!

Women's action as Louise McMurtrie holds off a challenge during the recent game between Queensland's Australian representatives and potential Australian representative teams. The photo was sent in by Rene Kamine.



BULLEEN LIONS ROAR HOME
Bulleen Lions under-11s, sponsored by Lou Azzarro - agent representative for Ermenegildo Zegna Australasia, completed the double by winning both the Autumn and Winter Eastern Division under-11 competitions. Back row from left: J. Moscatiello, G. Cacopardo, M. Pititto, S. Pipertzis, D. Antolovich, J. Sansone, O. Rayner; J. Jowett, M. De Angelis, S. Cacopardo, J. Frixou, B. Isai, A. Ardesi, F. Scaturchio, J. Pepe, L. Trevisan, A. Specchio.



IN THEIR PRIME

The Air New Zealand Golden Oldies tournament for players over 35 was held in October.

Teams took part from Slovenia, New Zealand and throughout Australia. Pictured are the Melbourne Juventus Old Boys. Back row (left to right): Vince Marrama, Cesare Fattore, Paul Lostia, Nicola Lorusso (team manager), Diego Lorenzi, Robert Vecchiatto, John Lucchesi (coach), Dominic Pesavento (president). Front row: Luciano Fioravanti, Ettore Flacco, Vince Lauletta, Claudio Lucchesi, Harry Fait, John Diquattro, Sauro Roccioletti.



AURELIO HITS THE DECK

This is another Rene Kamine shot, this time from the True Blues v International Travellers series. Aurelio Vidmar is pictured taking a tumble during the Brisbane clash.

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